

RICHARD DEACON

AUTHOR OF MADOC AND THE DISCOVERY
OF AMERICA

JOHN DEE

SCIENTIST·
GEOGRAPHER·
ASTROLOGER &
SECRET AGENT TO
ELIZABETH I



JOHN DEE

*Scientist, Geographer, Astrologer
and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I*

John Dee was an authority on mathematics, navigation, astronomy and optics, as well as being Astrologer Royal to Elizabeth I. In the eyes of many of his contemporaries he was also a charlatan, imposter and dabbler in Black Magic. Here, Richard Deacon tries to balance the record by revealing the many gifts of this remarkable scholar and the patriotic service he gave his country.

It is a difficult task: the problem with John Dee lies not so much in relating what he did but in interpreting his actions and explaining his motives. For Dee thought and often wrote in the strange language of the Cabbalists and developed the Enochian Alphabet to create a secret code of his own. Among many things, Deacon examines the theory that Dee used this code, as well as the "angelic visions" he claimed were seen by his assistant, Edward Kelley, as a cover for espionage and concealing secret information. Certainly it seems that John Dee was a roving secret agent of genius who won his way into the confidence of the crowned heads of Europe and helped Elizabeth thwart the Spanish Armada.

The life of John Dee is a story of extraordinary enterprise, and is compiled with the same resourceful authenticity that made the author's *Madoc and the Discovery of America* such a well-received work.

The Author

Richard Deacon's abilities as a specialist in historical research were indicated in his well-received *Madoc and the Discovery of America*, widely recognised as an important contribution to the literature of pre-Columbian discovery.

JOHN DEE

By the same author:

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF MR GLADSTONE
MADOC AND THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

JOHN DEE

SCIENTIST, GEOGRAPHER, ASTROLOGER
AND SECRET AGENT TO ELIZABETH I

by

RICHARD DEACON



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PREFACE

and

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WHEN I FIRST thought of writing a book about John Dee, I consulted the Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper, and received from him this salutary and, indeed, necessary warning: "You have chosen a *very* difficult subject, and I wonder if you realise how difficult it is. The biographical side of Dee is no doubt straightforward. But to *understand* his work (largely misunderstood by those who wrote about him) . . . one has to learn a new language to interpret the 'natural magicians' of the pre-Baconian world."

I should like to record my appreciation of this invaluable advice, while at the same time being realistic enough to absolve the Professor from any responsibility for my own interpretation of some of Dee's works and actions.

There is no doubt that the intellectual quests of Dee and his remarkable far-sightedness in many of his proposals have been neglected by those who chose to see him only as a magician. In an age when "visions" through psychedelic experiment have become a cult and when a *Psychedelic Magazine* is being published regularly in the United States, the "angelic conversations" of John Dee have an almost contemporary flavour and are worthy of study, for Dee was in many respects one of the founders, in England at least, of extra-sensory perception and a serious student of telepathy.

Apart from this many of Dee's techniques were closer to those of the present day than those of the age in which he lived. This

was especially true of his work in the field of intelligence, though, despite his signature of 007, he can better be compared to Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, Director of Naval Intelligence in World War I, than to James Bond.

I wish to express my warmest thanks to the many individuals and organisations who have helped me in my research into John Dee's story. First of all I must pay tribute to the courtesy and helpfulness of the following :

The staffs of the Manuscript Room of the British Museum, the Warburg Institute, the Ashmolean and Bodleian Libraries at Oxford; the Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge, the Radnorshire Historical Society; Miss C. A. Crimp, of the Richmond upon Thames Library.

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Finally, I should like to express my gratitude to the late Prince Serge Belloselski who gave me his own translation of the Russian manuscript, hitherto unpublished, by John Dee's son, Arthur, entitled *Divers Curious Narrations of Doctor John Dee*.

R. D.

THE QUEEN'S "EYES"

THE FIRST Queen Elizabeth of England had a passionate and at the same time coldly logical and intuitive interest in men's eyes.

"Hidden in a woman's soul," wrote Alfred de Musset, "is a mysterious weapon. Instinct, virgin, wild, incorruptible, which saves her from any need to learn, know, or reason; it bends man's strong will, overrules his sovereign reason, and makes our paltry lights of knowledge pale before it."

This description might well have been applied to Gloriana herself. For with Elizabeth this same process worked through a talent amounting almost to genius for discerning the abilities, the weaknesses and the character of men through their eyes. She not only concentrated her attention on the eyes of those around her, but frequently let them know in no uncertain terms that in this way their worth was recognised. It is not without significance that at least three men were nicknamed "Eyes" by their Queen in an age when nicknames were fashionable. There was Sir Christopher Hatton, who was one of her earliest intimates at Court. He was her "Lids" and he signed his letters to her with two triangles for the "lids" and dots inside for the eyes, thus:

△ △

"Adieu, most sweet Lady," he ended one letter to his Queen, "All and EveR your most happy bondsman, Lids."¹

By use of nicknames, a peculiarly English habit, Elizabeth not only secured the affection of her leading subjects, but subtly conveyed to them her own assessment of their characters. Sometimes

her choice of nicknames left men guessing, for she had a knack of making them into riddles; sometimes she would change the nickname in order to re-assess her subjects. Thus Hatton, who shared with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the soubriquet of "Eyes", later became "The Mutton" or "Bell-Wether", possibly because he was once rash enough to sign himself "Your Other Lids".

Sir Francis Walsingham, founder of the British Secret Service, was "my Moor", while Burghley was her "Spirit". The Queen was apt on occasions to explain her nicknames, playfully, it is true, but purposefully as well. "Sir Spirit," she wrote to Burghley when he was deeply concerned about the future of the State on one occasion, "I doubt I do nickname you, for those of your kind (they say) have no sense; but I have seen of late an *ecce signum* that if an ass kick you, you feel it too soon. I will recant you from being my spirit, if ever I perceive that you disdain not such a feeling. Serve God, fear the King, and be a good fellow to the rest. Don't be so silly a soul as not to regard her trust, who puts it in you."

Even foreigners were given nicknames by the Queen. Jean de Simier, the special envoy from France, was her "Monkey", a reference partly to his features, but equally to his mischievous wooing on behalf of his master, the Duke of Alençon. Simier, a master of the art of wooing by proxy, had an ironic sense of humour; when he stole one of the Queen's nightcaps from the bed-chamber and sent it to Alençon, he wrote apologetically to Elizabeth and signed himself "*votre pauvre singe*".

Alençon himself, whose blunt nose was disfigured with pock-marks, was nicknamed "*Grenouille*". Again the Queen let it be known that here was another riddle. A frog, she said, was not a beauty, but it was a charm for lovers. In this manner the Queen could for political purposes continue dallying with the idea of marrying Alençon, while indicating to those at home who opposed the marriage that she was well aware of his physical disadvantages.

All of which showed a singularly sophisticated and acutely observant mind, leavened with a neat turn of wit and sensitivity.

Hatton, perhaps, came closest to summing up her skill in discerning character, when he said that "The Queen did fish for men's souls, and had so sweet a bait that no one could escape her network. . . . I have seen her smile—sooth, with great semblance of good liking to all around her and cause everyone to open his most inward thought to her; when, on a sudden, she would ponder in private on what had passed, write down all their opinions, draw them out as occasion required, and sometimes disprove to their faces what had been delivered a month before. . . . She caught many poor fish, who little knew what snare was laid for them."

There was badinage, too, in this business of nicknames. Hatton, jealous of Leicester because they were both the Queen's "Eyes", was equally apprehensive that Sir Walter Raleigh was becoming a prime favourite. Raleigh's nickname was "Water", partly a pun on his first name, but equally indicative of the regard in which his Sovereign held him as a man supreme on the waters of the world. So, along with a mildly reproachful letter, Hatton sent the Queen a tiny bucket, intended in the riddle-me-ree manner in which educated Elizabethans corresponded to indicate Raleigh. The significance of the token was not lost upon the Queen. She replied verbally to her "Mutton" that the beasts of the fields were "so dear unto her that she had bounded her banks so sure as no *water* or floods could be able ever to overthrow them". To reassure Hatton she sent him a dove to signify that there should be "no more destruction by water", reminding him that she was a Shepherd and that he might realise "how dear her Sheep was to her".

The Earl of Leicester signed his letters to Elizabeth with two circles containing dots, thus:



But there was a third of her subjects who was also her "Eyes", but who signed his letters to her with two circles guarded by what might have been a square root sign or an elongated seven. It looked like this:



This letter-writer was John Dee, the Queen's astrologer, and his enigmatic signature was supposed to denote his own two eyes, as represented by the circles, plus the other four senses and a sixth, or occult sense, indicating that he was the "Secret Eyes" of the Queen.

There was no flippancy, no playfulness or wayward humour about this signature. It was the sign of a man who took both life and his Sovereign seriously and had ambitions to be her counsellor and guide. Seven, to Dee, was a sacred, a cabbalistic and a lucky number.²

That she took Dee equally seriously there seems little doubt. He was "My noble Intelligencer", "most faithful Dee", "my Ubiquitous Eyes", but there was never any playfulness in their relationship. In all her communications with Dee, both verbal and written, there was a note of awe and respect which was not always in evidence in her dealings with Hatton, Raleigh, or even the sagacious Burghley. Not once was there a note of doubt, nor of criticism, despite the fact that Dee had many enemies and many of them were close to the Queen. If others doubted Dee, his royal mistress stood by him.

The picture that emerged of John Dee after his death was that of a charlatan and black magician, a rogue and a sorcerer. Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* contains a vicious caricature of him and writers more restrained than Butler have completely misunderstood his character and work and accepted the view that he was an unscrupulous liar and dismissed his scholarship as tawdry and negligible. The charge that he was a "magician" was applied to him from the date of an incident as a university student at the age of nineteen. "Magician" and "sorcerer" were epithets hurled at him constantly throughout his life. So frequently were those allegations made that they were solemnly taken up by the *Biographica Britannica* which called him "extremely credulous, extravagantly vain and a most deluded enthusiast". Charles Mackay gilded this picture still further by claiming that Dee "unfortunately quitted mathematics and pursuits of true philosophy to indulge in the unprofitable reveries of the occult sciences".³

What was the truth? Was the title of "Eyes" merely a reference by the Queen to Dee's astrological interests and crystal-gazing, or was there a subtler interpretation of it? Elizabeth was fond of giving her nicknames a *double entendre* and the additional use of the word "Intelligencer" in referring to him suggests that Dee was regarded as something more than a crystal-gazer.

The strange hieroglyphic which Dee employed to sign some of his secret messages could have several interpretations, according to whether one regards the "sixth sense" to which he alluded as something psychic or something scientific. But there is no doubt that Dee himself saw his "sixth sense", as he called it, as a combination of the two and a means of providing his royal mistress with the intelligence system for which she craved. Life, claimed Oscar Wilde, was always imitating art, but in the case of Ian Fleming's creation of James Bond the reverse was true. Here was the twentieth-century author unconsciously borrowing as a code name for his hero the very signature used by Bond's Elizabethan counterpart—007.

The idea of Dee as a roving James Bond of Tudor times may seem far-fetched and tampering with history. That it has a basis in fact the following story will reveal.

* * *

Throughout the middle 'eighties of the sixteenth century England lived in an uneasy peace and under a threat of invasion curiously like that of the middle 'thirties of the twentieth century. There was the same built-in belief among the mass of the population that England could not be invaded, the same forces at work within the ranks of those governing the country who believed in "playing for time", in trying to remain neutral and avoiding war at all costs. As in the nineteen-thirties a majority of the ruling classes wanted to play for safety and keep out of war with Spain, while the masses were in a mood for foreign adventures, for imperialist expansion and for checking the power of Spain before it was too late.

Lord Burghley led the old school of royal advisers who called for caution and urged the Queen not to yield to the young hot-

heads who were eager for the glory and rich prizes which a war with Spain might bring. Elizabeth, who, for a woman, balanced the instincts of her heart against the quite remarkable logic of her head in an extremely efficient manner, held a position which could roughly be described as slightly left of centre. Her head told her that the Spanish threat was serious and must not be underestimated, but that England should not risk being isolated by taking the lead in checking Spain. For England, perched perilously on the fringes of Europe and isolated by sea, the balance of continental powers was almost axiomatic. France, in her opinion, should be the first to challenge Spain's growing power. It has been suggested that she would have cheerfully fought Spain to the last drop of French blood, which is not altogether fair. From 1581-83 there seemed some sense in this policy. France had launched an army into the Netherlands and sent an expedition to the Azores in support of the claimant to the throne of Portugal. But it was soon apparent that France had blundered into the same kind of disaster which might have befallen England had she taken similar one-sided measures. The Spaniards destroyed the Portuguese expedition and the French army in the Netherlands behaved in much the same manner as the French army in the German campaign of 1940: the French, crushed by the Duke of Parma, turned against the very cities they were intended to save.

Slowly, but surely, the Queen showed her hand. She knighted Drake, who had just returned home after his magnificent exploits in the *Golden Hind*, thus not only creating a popular hero, but implying her support for his hostility to the Spaniards. That was her first open move in swinging opinion away from the ultra-cautious Burghley. In secret she opened up her own communications with those intelligence forces who for years had been trying to warn the Court about Spanish aggressive plans against England. Despite the fact that they had been cleverly and diligently organised by Sir Francis Walsingham, their messages had not always got through to the right quarter. In Tudor days as in modern times there was a tendency in intelligence circles to report what one's master wished to hear rather than the truth.

In 1584 Dee had been instrumental in obtaining evidence which showed that the Spanish ambassador in London was linked up in the Throckmorton plot, following which he was expelled. He had left the country muttering that Don Bernardino de Mendoza would have no successor until his king had reduced England to defeat and dependence upon Spain. If Dee, who was then far distant in Prague, could supply information on what was going on in London, could he not equally inform the Queen of what was being planned in Spain? So, thought Elizabeth, who showed herself well in advance of her age by believing that intelligence on a certain country could best be obtained by agents living outside that territory. It was a technique which Dee himself had developed pertinaciously.

Indeed, one of the main reasons for Dee's continental trips was to develop his own intelligence service to enable him to have direct access to the Queen. No man saw more clearly than Dee the true nature of the Spanish menace. No one realised better how the Queen's natural instincts for tackling the problem boldly were kept in check by Burghley. The real trouble was that the Queen had been warned for so long about the threat of war from Spain and it had not materialised that in recent years she had begun to be sceptical about such a possibility. Elizabeth was grateful to Walsingham for his efforts in building up an English espionage service, but she was suspicious about the deductions which Walsingham, and to a greater extent Leicester, drew from the reports he had. What Elizabeth needed to convince her of the menace of Spain's intentions was some positive evidence to link the Spanish king with aggressive designs on England.

Could Dee confirm that the Spaniards positively sought the destruction of England? The Queen wanted no tittle-tattle, no back-stairs gossip, no documents which might be faked, but indisputable proof.

One of Dee's intimates at this time was Francesco Pucci, a scholar and dabbler in the occult, who, though a Catholic, travelled extensively in heretical lands and was notorious for his unorthodox opinions. Pucci, who was in Prague in 1585, told Dee that a small party of Frenchmen, financed by the Spanish Court,

were being sent to England on a mission. He could not say what that mission was exactly, but it was something to do with stopping the English building ships. The only clue, it seemed, was that they must arrive at their trysting place "before three yeares were ended and the nine men beginne their Perambulation."

Fortunately Dee had an encyclopaedic knowledge of his native country, including a wealth of detail on ancient customs in remote parts of England and Wales. Here, too, his study of the magic of the ancient world stood him in good stead. Three was a sacred number with the Druids and three threes even more so. Three and nine, argued Dee, must have some Druidic significance. No doubt the professional intelligence men at Elizabeth's Court would have regarded such theorising as raving nonsense, but this was the single clue on which Dee worked. By Francis Garland he dispatched to London what seemed to be yet another example of his recorded "conversations with the angels" through the medium of his crystal-gazing. It read thus:

"Ma. 'I am a poor little maiden, Madimi, but I rejoyce in the name of Jesus.'

"Δ. 'What is it that you can see?'

"Ma. 'I see the coming of the end of the three yeare circle and the approche of the Nine Guardians of the Vert.'

"Δ. 'What does that portend?'

"Ma. 'Here is something that maketh me afraid. I see the Bible and a stick of hollie and the danger of perjury by someone. It is a test of loyalty.'

"Δ. Madimi's gown changed colour from red to green and she shook it as though the skirt was a tree rustling in the wind. She went up and down with livelie gestures, dancing and pretending she was a tree bent this way and that in the breeze, as though she performed a charade.

"Δ. 'Whose man are you?'

"Ma. 'I am the servant of God both by my bounden duty and by his Adoption. For me the truth is sacred.'

"Δ. 'What more do you see?'

"Ma. 'I see the risk of fire, great fire.' Her dress changed colour to red again.

"Δ. 'What is the significance of the three yeares and the Nine Men?'

"Ma. 'The Nine are Guardians of the RF Δ. They must acte against fire by the creatures of the Scorpion. O.S.V.'

"Δ. 'And the Nine must watch for the chimney of smoke?'

"Ma. 'I must not guess the truth, but so it would seem. My sister has torn two leaves from the book which would have tolde me.'"

Prosaically Dee added a footnote that at this stage of the dialogue he was called from the crystal "by the earnest cries of my folk desiring supper."⁴

This is typical of the many "angelic conversations which Dee recorded, with his informant invariably portrayed as the girl named Madimi. In the dialogue "Ma" stands for Madimi and the Greek Δ for Dee. "O.S.V." according to modern interpreters of necromantic signs is an abbreviation for "Ol Sonf Vorsg", which means "I reign over you" from the first key in the so-called Enochian or "angelic language" of Dee.

Back to London went the message. Here it was certainly not regarded as gibberish, or the ravings of a lunatic crystal-gazer. There were several clues contained in the strange dialogue. "RF Δ" was the Royal Forest of Dean. The "coming of the ende of the three yeare circle" was the approach of the triennial Perambulations of the Forest by the Nine Foresters appointed by the Court of Verderers to protect "vert and venison". Dee understood Druidic lore and the significance of the number three in the Druids' arrangement of life. The Druidic year was 360 days and when three of these cycles were completed the Verderers, nine in number, made their tour of inspection of the Forest. The reference to the "Bible and the stick of hollie" concerned another Druidical survival in the Forest of Dean, as when a witness took the oath before the Verderers' Court, set up by Canute in 1016, he did not hold the Bible with his hands, but touched it with a stick of holly. Clearly it was indicated that there was a risk that somebody would perjure himself before this Court. Madimi's dance seemed to suggest a forest and that there was

danger of fire in that forest. "The creatures of the Scorpion" was the code Dee employed for Spanish agents.

On the Queen's instructions inquiries were set afoot in Gloucestershire and word was given to keep watch for the "small party of Frenchmen" who were acting as emissaries of the Spanish Court. The pattern of events soon became clear. The Forest of Dean had for centuries been a main source of supply for Navy timber and most of the timber for the Elizabethan dockyards came from this royal forest. Indeed, one of the functions of the Court of Verderers was to deter trespassers and protect such vitally important strategic material. The object of this Spanish-inspired mission, which Dee had discovered in Prague, was to try to bribe the foresters to burn down the trees.⁵

While Elizabeth had built up a small, but serviceable fleet, it had been more a maritime extension of England's defensive system, in effect an inshore patrolling navy. Of the twenty-two ships which Elizabeth inherited from Mary many were completely unseaworthy. Money for new ships had been grudgingly given in the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign, but now the demand was for an aggressive, ocean-going navy which would sail the high seas, seek out the enemy ships and destroy them. Spain fully realised that, belatedly, England was committed to a completely new programme of ship-building and that the only way to check this was by hitting at timber supplies. Burning the Forest of Dean, therefore, was a target of supreme importance for Philip of Spain, as vital to Spanish policy as was the R.A.F.'s devastation of the Ruhr to Britain in World War II.

The problem was how to locate the enemy agents. The news that they had dispersed after arrival in London did not help their swift detection. The Court of Verderers was alerted and the search began. But the Forest of Dean was an exceptionally dense area of woodland and was ten miles long and eight wide. Anybody could stay there undetected for months; it was an ideal hiding place. Despite the harsh penalties inflicted by the Court of Verderers on offenders against the Forest Code—for poaching alone the penalty could be the loss of an ear or a hand, or even

the skinning of the victim—there had always been a large body of outlaws roaming its depths.

Suddenly the true significance of that phrase of Dee's dialogue—"the Nine must watch for the Chimney of Smoke"—was realised. Foresters had claimed from time immemorial that if they could "draw smoke between sunset and sunrise" they were entitled to a plot of land on which they had built a chimney. What happened was that a man would choose some secluded site and build a chimney there, then gradually complete a small cottage and erect a fence around the plot of land. There were hundreds of these squatters in Tudor times. If the Spanish agents had linked up with these squatters and organised a systematic plan for firing the forest on the basis of bribes and a promise of the immunity of their respective parts of the forest, a deadly blow could be struck against Britain's naval power in a single week.

The way the conversation between Dee and Madimi was phrased it suggested that this question by Dee was intended to ventilate his own theory of what might transpire, and Madimi's reply meant that this was but a hunch of his and could not be confirmed by evidence. In fact Dee's knowledge of Forest custom and law enabled him to diagnose the Spaniards' plans accurately. The Verderers kept a special watch for smoke and as a result rounded up two of the Spanish agents. They had claimed squatters' rights and were proposing to use their cottage as a headquarters for planning a series of simultaneous fires in key points of the Forest. They had mapped the entire area, obviously with some local help, and marked with crosses the points at which fires were to be started, significantly just before the Verderers were due to make their Perambulation.

It was a brilliant plan, daringly executed as far as it went, and it could have ruined England's naval building programme for years to come. Yet, equally brilliantly, one lone English agent in far-off Prague had shown something of the skill and know-how of modern counter-espionage in preventing the coup.

UNDER THE SIGN OF THE CRAB

"CANCER THE Crab is by nature a very cautious character, with a long memory. The home is the basis of life for all men of Cancer. They live in a world of emotion and spiritual experience which they translate into action. They are diligent workers, capable of prolonged spells of intense activity and very conscientious in all tasks they undertake."

So states an astrological tract about people born under the zodiacal sign of Cancer. It goes on to affirm that the man born under the sign of Cancer knows where he is going, that he has a gentle manner and is not aggressive. "As with the crab, which is his symbol, he prefers to approach his aims in an oblique manner. He manoeuvres us all and, especially his nearest and dearest, in a subtle way that often escapes attention, but not one who knows him doubts that Cancer rules in the home. Without a home Cancer subjects are in the depths of misery.

"Although they are very sensitive to atmosphere and seem to know what others are thinking and feeling, they hide their reactions and their susceptibilities behind a hard exterior. They can be sympathetic towards, and even deeply moved by the troubles of other people. Externally they seem changeable and adaptable, but in their hearts they never change."

Whether or not one accepts or rejects the precepts of astrology, there can be no denying that this summary of character could be accurately applied to John Dee. Certainly he preferred to "approach his aims in an oblique manner", as the previous chapter and the singularly oblique method of conveying intelli-

gence through an "angelic conversation" showed. So it is no surprise to learn that this astrologer was born under the sign of Cancer on the thirteenth day of July, 1527, at Mortlake, then a village on the Thames outside London.¹

His father was Rowland Dee, variously described as "a minor official at the Court of King Henry VIII" and "a member of the Royal Household". In fact he held a relatively humble office, being a Gentleman Server to the King, which meant that he was chief carver at the King's table and manager of the royal kitchen. His wife was Johanna, or Jane, daughter of one William Wild, and she appears to have been shrewd, devoted and of a retiring disposition in contrast to her husband who was sometimes injudicious and boastful.

The family had known better days and John Dee in later life took great pleasure, as well as spending much time and research, in tracing his ancestry back to Rhodri the Great, King of Wales in the pre-Norman era, even claiming that his pedigree established him as a cousin of Queen Elizabeth. Such pride in ancestry was not misplaced. Rowland Dee came from an ancient and noble Welsh family who had lived for several generations at Nant-yr-Groes in the parish of Pilleth in Radnorshire. Dee was an anglicised version of the true family name which was really Du, or Ddu, meaning black. The first member of the family to use this spelling was John's grandfather, Bedo Ddu, often called "The Great Bedo Dee". He was standard-bearer to Lord de Ferrars at the siege of Tournay in 1513 and who, a year earlier than this, had fought under the Emperor Maximilian.

According to the Genealogical Rolls showing Dee's ancestry in the Cotton Charter, John Dee's great-grandfather was one Dafydd Ddu, whose will was dated 1412. But the Dees' line of descent could be traced back much further than this: Dafydd Ddu was descended from Llewelyn Crugeryr, a Welsh chieftain whose forbears included Rhys ap Tewdr, a prince of South Wales in 1077, whose seat was also in Radnorshire. To this extent the Dees had a link with the House of Tudor.²

John Dee not only took great pride in his Welsh ancestry, but maintained his links with Wales throughout his life, doing much

to encourage a wider interest in the Welsh language, its culture and ancient legends. He spent much time in trying to locate lost manuscripts of the Welsh bards and became a friend of William Salesbury, the first man to publish the *New Testament* in Welsh. Urging on Salesbury the need for Welsh youth to regard their language as being of as much importance as Latin and Hebrew, he sent that scholar the following advice:

*"Cernis ut Hebraeus aequet formasque Latinas, nec sit Romanis Cambricalingua minor. Disce trium formas linguarum Cambra juventus, nec tibi materno sit satis ore loqui. Sed neque disce tamen: didicisti Cambra juventus; structuram satis est te meminisse tuas."*³

It was Dee's father who instilled into him a love of Wales, and, though we know very little about Rowland Dee, it seems possible that his rather brash Welsh patriotism may have caused him to make enemies at Court. He was injudicious enough to boast of the "royal blood" in his veins and this was regarded as the arrogance of an upstart by Henry Tudor, despite the monarch's own Welsh lineage. Rowland Dee was apparently treated somewhat shabbily by his royal master and the promotion he sought was never granted. Here it is interesting to digress once again to the "angelic conversations" of Dee's crystal ball. In one of these Madimi, the spirit girl, finds a picture of Henry VIII in her book:

"Ma. . . 'Here is a grim Lord, He maketh me afraid.'

"Δ. 'Why doth he make you afraid?'

"Ma. . . 'He is a stern fellow. . . .'"⁴

Was this Dee's own assessment of his father's master?

Rowland Dee had no fortune of his own and John Dee's childhood was spent in genteel poverty. Nevertheless, thanks to an ambitious if disappointed father and a wise and influential mother, young Dee was given every chance to develop his talents, for it was evident at an early age that he was precocious and exceptionally gifted. As a child he had an extraordinary memory for detail and an ability to work out quite complicated mathematical problems in his head. He had a religious upbringing,

though there is no evidence what his parents thought about the religious upheaval which Henry VIII's break with Rome brought about. From Dee's own utterances it would seem that he held what in modern parlance would be an almost ecumenical outlook, a respect for the ancient Catholic Church tempered with an appreciation of the peculiarly English aspects of Protestantism.

About the year 1537, when the dissolution of the monasteries had still not been completed, the boy Dee was sent to the Chantry School at Chelmsford in Essex, where he was taught the rudimentary elements of Latin grammar by Peter Wileigh, the same priest who, some years later, was approved for his "honest conversations" by the King's Commissioners when they visited Chelmsford. It is probable that John Dee served Peter Wileigh at the chantry altars; certainly with other pupils he was brought up in the Catholic faith. But beyond rituals and Latin he would have learned little else at the Chantry School, for the grammar schools of the day concentrated almost entirely on teaching their pupils the language in which their future studies would be conducted—the Roman tongue. It was a simple, formal and narrow education and contained no echo of that holocaust of argument outside the churches, pictured by Henry VIII in his Christmas speech to Parliament in 1545, when he spoke of the Bible being "disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled in every ale-house and tavern."

In November, 1542, at the age of fifteen, John Dee left Chelmsford and the security of the cloisters for the freedom of Cambridge, where he became a student of St. John's College. Not for him the frivolities of wine parties and wenching which were the principal activities of undergraduates after nightfall. Provided students obeyed a few simple rules, such as attendance at certain lectures and chapel services, they were free to do as they wished. But Dee imposed on himself a rigid discipline, despite the freedom offered him. He recorded that "in the yeares 1543, 1544 and 1545 I was so vehementlie bent to studie that for those yeares I did inviolably keep this order: only to sleep four houres every night; to allow to meate and drink (and some refreshing after) two houres every day; and of the other eighteen

houres all (except the time of going to and being at divine service) was spent in my studies and learning."

St. John's College had only been founded in 1511, occupying the site of the former Augustinian Hospital of St. John, suppressed through the influence of Lady Margaret Beaumont in 1509 so that she might found a college of the same name. The college was founded under her will through the efforts of her chief executor, Bishop John Fisher, who was first holder of the chair of divinity at Cambridge. It was an exciting and fruitful period in which to be at Cambridge for many reasons. The arrival of Erasmus, the first teacher of Greek in the university, was in itself a signal of a real renaissance of learning and Erasmus was quick to praise St. John's as a seat of "sound learning and a truly evangelical spirit." The Reformation saw Cambridge develop as a centre of Protestantism, which pleased Henry VIII and caused him to favour the university by creating there professorships in divinity, civil law, physic, Hebrew and Greek. But the dissolution of the monasteries robbed students of lodgings in the monastic houses and they had to make their own arrangements for accommodation and were left much more to their own devices. Some succumbed to the temptations of greater freedom and studied too little; others, especially the poorer students, could not afford to stay on at the university. It says much for Dee's determination that he overcame both obstacles.

Another disadvantage, which became accentuated later, was that the attempts to stamp out Popery in the university caused educational standards to suffer. This may have been one reason why Dee intensified his own efforts and determined to continue his education overseas when possible. He entered first the scholastic *Trivium*, a three-years' course of grammar, logic and rhetoric, which was followed by the *Quadrivium*, four years devoted to mathematics, astronomy, geography and music.

Until the Renaissance the great Greek writers had only been read in Latin translations. Now they were being re-discovered in the original Greek and one of the purposes of young Dee's burning of the midnight candle at his studies was to persevere with his Greek. His zeal was rewarded in 1546 when he was

appointed Under-Reader of Greek at the newly founded Trinity College, where Robert Pember, the tutor of Roger Ascham, was Principal Reader in this subject. Shortly afterwards Dee was made a Fellow of Trinity and in the same year he graduated as a Bachelor of Arts in his own college.⁵

It was about this time that John Dee was first accused of being a sorcerer. It was a charge that was repeated constantly throughout his life. Aubrey in his *Perambulations of Surrey* spoke of "Mr. John Dee of Mortlake" as being "one of the ornaments of his age, but he was mistaken by the ignorant for a conjuror."

The first incident which led to these allegations was when Dee helped to produce the play *Pax* by Aristophanes at Trinity College. Dee attempted in the mid-sixteenth century some of the techniques of stage management of the latter part of the nineteenth century. In an attempt at a realistic production he created an elaborate mechanical beetle to depict the flight of Trygaeus, the vine-dresser, mounted on his great scarab or dung-beetle, from the stage to the "Palace of Zeus" which he situated in the roof of his proscenium. Dee was merely showing that he had studied not only the texts of Athenian drama, but the stage directions and devices then employed. The Greeks had used crude cranes for lifting actors to make melodramatic appearances at high windows or on high ledges, primitive enough tricks which still required an effort of imagination on the part of audiences. Dee decided to go one better and to make the act of flight seem so miraculous as to be one hundred per cent realistic. It was this initiative which gave rise to the rumours that he was a sorcerer.

Witchcraft and sorcery were then regarded as the most heinous of crimes. There was an Act against sorcery on the Statute Book, with the severest penalties attached to it. In 1541 a Welsh minstrel had been denounced as a "false prophet" and put to death on that charge; it was unfortunate for Dee that he had Welsh ancestry for the Welsh were regarded as sorcerers by many.

Yet the truth was that Dee was simply an inquiring mind in an age when most inquisitive intellectuals had to conduct their studies in that no-man's-land between established fact and the

mystical territory of natural magic. Thus was astronomy in its primitive forms associated with astrology and the more remarkable scientific discoveries with the theory that the explanations for certain phenomena were deliberately hidden mysteries that only a study of natural magic could reveal. The Bible and Aristotle affected the development of these ideas and the revelation of Aristotelian books of natural philosophy in the Renaissance era also developed an acute interest in natural phenomena and their meanings. There was a thin dividing line between what was established as the truth and what a study of natural magic might reveal. Imagination and superstition might sway the student too far over that line into realms of speculation that were both fanciful and dangerous, but the fact remains that these risks were mainly taken in a quest for the truth. Just how honestly and eagerly this quest for truth was pursued in Tudor days is only now being belatedly understood. Much of it is not even completely understood yet. The Renaissance is far from being definitely described; historians have woefully neglected its development on the scientific side.

Dee's chief interests at this time were in mathematics and navigation. He realised that great strides in navigational discoveries and techniques had been made in both Italy and the Low Countries and that if he wished to learn about these he must travel. Erasmus had encouraged him to use his knowledge of Greek and Latin by travelling on the continent and visiting some of the universities of Europe. In one sense his Welsh ancestry and enthusiasm for the ancient Welsh culture had given him an imaginative approach to some of the intellectual problems of the day. He was impressed by the fact that the Druids not only understood, but taught astronomy and he felt that in some ways there was much more to be learned in the cultures of the ancient world, those cultures which had been lost in the Dark Ages and which might provide the missing link between the new cultures and the unknown.

So in May, 1547, John Dee went to the Low Countries, being convinced that here lived and taught the most progressive navigators and mathematicians in Europe. He attended the University

of Louvain. It was a short stay, as he was anxious to return to Cambridge to take his M.A. degree. But it was long enough for him to strike up a friendship with Gerardus Mercator, the originator of a method of cosmographical projection in which latitude and longitude were indicated by straight instead of curved lines, to serve the purposes of practical navigation and steering by the compass. Dee brought back with him to Cambridge two of Mercator's globes as well as newly devised astronomical instruments which he presented to Trinity College.

Back in Cambridge, he took his M.A. degree and obtained a written testimonial from the university authorities as to his character and scholarship and then in the summer of 1548 he returned to Louvain where he became a student at the university.

The great advantage for English and all other European students at universities at this time was that Latin was the common tongue for them all. Thus an Englishman such as Dee would have been as much at home at Louvain as would a Frenchman at Oxford or Cambridge. Fortunately for the Tudors the most enlightened of their scholars took full advantage of this by studying on the continent.

Louvain University was celebrated as not only one of the oldest in Europe, but also one of the most famous as a home of the "new learning". Its system of competitive honours drew the most ambitious students in Europe to Louvain. Dee took the *Collegium Trilingue*, which included a study of Greek, Latin and Hebrew, and he swiftly acquired a high reputation as a mathematician and philosopher in an age when mathematics was much more philosophical than in the present day. Through their intensive classical training the young mathematical students brought imagination to bear on abstract problems; mysticism and the Church played an influential role so that the mathematics student was encouraged to dream and speculate as well as to be exact and precise, to follow the maxim of St. Thomas Aquinas that the sources of knowledge are both reason and revelation.

To this extent there was an almost invisible dividing line between the realms of mathematical science and the occult. So Dee's growing interest in the occult was neither surprising, nor

unconventional at this stage. A contemporary of his at Louvain, where he studied medicine, was Nicholas Biesius of Ghent, who later became academic orator to the Duke of Alva. Biesius was undoubtedly one of the influences on Dee's thinking at this time. He had listed various kinds of occult art and observed that they all seemed to have originated in the precept that all things are bound in an inevitable series of causes and that all bodies were governed by incorporeal forces. Biesius took the view that animals, being more sensitive than man, were closer to the hidden forces in nature, pointing out that they could anticipate changes in weather long before man. It was an acutely important scientific observation which later scientists have neglected to follow up as closely as they might have done. Biesius admitted astrological influence, but was doubtful about the true nature of natural magic.

For it was "natural magic", or "white magic", which occupied the minds of many scholars in this era. One needs to learn a new language to interpret the "natural magicians" of the pre-Baconian world and Renaissance neo-Platonism. A clear-cut definition of "white magic" is not easy to make because to oversimplify may necessitate overlooking some cardinal factor. But, generally speaking, the scholars' view of "white magic" was that it was a natural, and therefore, a good force, that it seemed magical because its workings were spiritual and invisible and therefore not normally given to mortals to understand. "Black magic" on the other hand—and on this scholars both lay and clerical were agreed—was something quite different, a force for evil conjured up by men either for evil purposes or through superstition and ignorance. Once one realises that the scholars made these clear distinctions it becomes much easier to recognise the logic of their arguments and to appreciate that such philosophising, far from being mumbo-jumbo, was a positive search for truth.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the problem for the scholars was where to make the dividing line between science and the occult, how to go further than the established truths by probing into the unknown, to echo Hamlet's cry to Horatio. One

of the most popular explorers of the twin worlds of science and magic was Benedict Pererius, a Jesuit priest of Valencia, who produced a book on dreams and divination by astrology. Pererius admitted the existence of natural magic, which he dubbed the "noblest part of physical science, medicine and mathematics." He argued that men skilled in knowledge of nature could work great wonders by it, but that wicked or ignorant men could "learn even natural magic only from demons." "Scarcely any mortal," he wrote, "can attain to such natural magic." It was permissible for a Christian to observe certain dreams, but not others. Those signifying ills of body or mind could be usefully examined by physicians. When dreams gave cause for trouble, the cause of them should be found and removed. He pointed out that monks were skilled in investigating and explaining the causes of dreams, but that there were no fixed rules for interpreting them.

The theory of the time that a physician should be a good astronomer was not lost on Dee. He had already studied astronomy and, according to his statement in his work *Ephemerides*, had at Cambridge taken "thousands of observations of the heavenly influences and operations in this elementall portion of the worlde." So he now turned to Biesius to study medicine with him.

The Church, though condemning black magic, took a lively interest in natural magic. D. P. Walker writes that "a very few pro-magicians, such as Pomponazzi, explained all religious effects, including miraculous ones, by natural (psychological and astrological) causes; and some very liberal Catholic magicians had no objection to identifying religious and magical practices. The historical importance of these connexions between magic and religion is, I think, that they led people to ask questions about religious practices and experiences which would not otherwise have occurred to them; and, by approaching religious problems through magic, which was at least partially identical with, or exactly analogous to religion, but which could be treated without reverence or devotion, they were able sometimes to suggest answers which, whether true or not, were new and fruitful."⁶

Pythagoras' teaching about the mystical meaning of numbers

had deeply impressed medieval scholars and the propositions of Euclid were often regarded as parables to point as much to the unseen as the seen. Dee eagerly explored such abstract problems and pursued his studies of alchemy and astrology without fear of being laughed at or dubbed a sorcerer, as had been the case at Cambridge. In the Low Countries he met the orientalist, Antonius Gogava, and became immersed in the didactic hexagrams of the Chinese philosophers. Louvain had been the refuge until twelve years before Dee's arrival there of the alchemist Cornelius Agrippa, who had acted as secretary and librarian to Margaret of Parma, and whose work *De Occulta Philosophia* had been published at Antwerp in 1531. Agrippa's views were already keenly studied in the university and Dee himself was greatly influenced by them.

Indeed, to understand the direction Dee was taking in his studies, one must first grasp the theories of Agrippa. The latter's opinion was that "the practice of magic" was one of the lawful ways by which man could attain to a knowledge of God and Nature. This was the kind of approach which appealed to Dee, who had a religious mind, and throughout his life he maintained that occult practices were not an obstacle to the Christian faith and that, on occasions, they could actually help to sustain it. Agrippa summed up his views in somewhat of an abstract manner: "The form of things, although by their own nature they are conveyed to the senses of men and animals, can, however, while they are in the air, receive a certain impression from the heavens, by means of which, as also by the fitness deriving from the recipient's disposition, they may be transmitted to the senses of one recipient rather than another. And hence it is possible, naturally, and without any kind of superstition, and through the mediation of no other spirit, for a man to convey such thoughts to someone else in a very short time, however far apart they may be from each other; and, though the time in which this is done cannot be exactly measured, it will inevitably happen within twenty-four hours."⁷

This view was to lead Dee to explore the possibilities of what is now known as telepathy. But that was to come much later.

Meanwhile he was fully occupied at the University of Louvain where he had succeeded so well that he now taught logic, arithmetic and the use of globes. Though a dreamer and would-be pioneer in the perilous fields of natural magic, he retained a disciplined mind and a cautious pragmatism. His motto, written in an album when he was a student in the Low Countries, bears this out. It was simple and to the point: "nothing is useful unless it is honest."

He must have swiftly established a reputation as an imaginative and attractive lecturer, for his fame soon spread beyond Louvain. Nobles from the Court of Charles V, then resident in Brussels, visited him, including Joannes Capito, who was physician to the Danish King, and Sir William Pickering, afterwards the English Ambassador to France, was his pupil. Pickering provided one of the earliest descriptions of Dee as a young man—"this tall, slighte youthe, lookyng wise beyonde his yeares, with fair skin, good lookes and a brighte colour."

There is no record of his having graduated as a doctor either at Cambridge or Louvain, and one must surmise that the title of "Doctor" was given to him as a courtesy, not as a right. It was probably bestowed in a complimentary sense to one being regarded as *doctus*, or learned. Certainly he was referred to in later life at the English Court as "Doctor Dee".

He was, however, devoted to Trinity College, Cambridge, as his gift of Mercator's navigational instruments shows. Dee kept in the closest touch with his old university from Louvain and utilised his friendship with Mercator to launch a mathematical and navigational instrument-making industry in England, realising that in these matters his country was lagging behind the continent. Under his direction copies of Mercator's globes and an astronomer's ancillary ring and staff of brass were made at Cambridge.

It must have been about this time that Dee more or less on his own initiative started to gather Intelligence for his country. King Charles V of Spain kept his Court in Brussels where Mercator had his patronage and Dee seems to have been one of the first to realise that to keep up with England's potential enemy,

Spain, the English must increase their knowledge of the new navigational techniques. Thus it could be said that Dee was the first man to practise industrial espionage on the English side. Everything he learned from Mercator was carefully noted and passed back to England. His passion for secrecy has been noted by Professor Eva Taylor, who writes: "John Dee unfortunately preferred to keep his specialised knowledge out of print and it is impossible to tell quite what his new instrument was that he called the Paradoxical Compass. . . . It appears to have included a polar zenithal chart for setting course and avoiding the errors of the plain chart. Dee was a great admirer of Pedro Nuñez."⁸

It is one of the minor tragedies of the compilation of history that Dee was so secretive, so fearful of his own secrets being discovered, that either he never committed much important information to paper, or he wrapped it up in cyphers and codes that are not always easy to interpret. If he borrowed and adapted continental ideas, he also developed theories of his own and it was his originality as well as his skill as a lecturer that brought students from all over Europe flocking to hear him in Louvain. He corresponded with scholars in the universities of Cologne, Ferrara, Bologna, Heidelberg, Orleans, Rome, Verona and Urbino. Several years later when narrating his achievements of these early days to Queen Elizabeth's Commissioners he described how "beyond the seas was a good opinion conceived of my studies mathematical and scholastical."

There is no need to doubt his assessment of himself. The evidence is there quite independently to show that this was so. On leaving Louvain in 1550 he stayed some months in Paris where there were more than four thousand students at that time. Offers of posts were made to him in Paris, though not from Cambridge or London, where he seems to have been less appreciated. It was suggested that he should take the post of King's Reader in Mathematics at Paris, but he declined. Similarly he turned down an offer to serve Monsieur de Monlac, who was setting off as a special envoy from France to the Great Turk. Dee, always patriotic, felt that his services should be used on behalf of England and preferred to bide his time until a worth-

while offer came from his native country. This may have been laudable, but it lost Dee the chance of making money quickly while he was still young. The offer at the University of Paris was worth a stipend of two hundred crowns.

While lecturing at the College of Rheims he gave a course on Euclid, free to all who attended, which was in itself somewhat of an innovation. So popular were his lectures at Rheims that not only was the hall filled on every occasion, but an eager crowd of students climbed the walls of the college and listened to him from outside the open windows. No other Englishman had had such success on the continent for many years.

IMPRISONMENT

IN 1551 DEE returned to England, optimistic and ambitious. It is almost certain that one reason he refused the posts offered to him in Paris was that he knew that his good friend, Sir John Cheke, one of the Greek scholars at St. John's College, was now tutor to the young King Edward VI and might use his influence on Dee's behalf at Court.

Thus on his return he immediately sought Sir John's aid. If Sir John needed other advice on the subject, there were plenty of other scholars to vouch for Dee; Cunningham, Blundeville and Billingsley among them, as well as Thomas Smith, his old tutor, and Ascham, who taught the Princess Elizabeth. These men knew that the Faustian portrait of Dee as a "manipulator of devils" was utterly false. Dee already had two books to his credit—*The Art of Logicke* (1547) and *The Thirteen Sophisticall Fallacies*, (1548) and both these works revealed an extraordinary maturity, extensive scholarship and firm purpose. He had studied humanism in relation to the Puritan movement and, as a result, had developed his own approach towards contemporary religion, regarding this as a kind of pursuit of secret knowledge, believing that only through intellectual development could a man perceive in "God's work God himself."

Sir John Cheke introduced Dee to Secretary Cecil, who, on behalf of the young King, accepted two manuscript treatises by Dee, both on astronomical subjects, which Dee had dedicated to the King.

The outcome of this was a yearly pension of one hundred

crowns, granted by the King. This was only half the money he had been offered in Paris and it was exchanged, not very profitably, for the lay rectorships of Upton-upon-Severn in Worcestershire and Long Leadenham in Lincolnshire. All his life Dee was to need money desperately, yet he frequently showed a disregard for mere financial gain and this exchange of cash for the meagre income of two minor livings was an example of his casual and unbusinesslike attitude to money. It may have been that Dee was anxious to achieve some degree of respectability to counteract the disgrace brought on his family by the imprisonment of his father in the Tower of London in 1553. There is no clear evidence as to what misdemeanours his father had committed: they were probably political rather than felonious.

No doubt when he accepted the livings Dee believed that leisure in which to pursue his studies was more important than money. Soon after these appointments he turned down the offer of a lectureship in mathematical science from the University of Oxford. There was another reason why he was content with his rectorships: he had the patronage of the Duchess of Northumberland and she greatly encouraged him to continue his researches and writing. It was at her request that he wrote a treatise on the cause of tides and another on the heavenly bodies. The Duchess' husband, the ill-starred father-in-law of Lady Jane Grey, was not only an ambitious politician, but an extremely cultured man, a friend of Ascham's and for a short period Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. Dee may well have felt that two such powerful patrons could not only enable him to carry out his ambitious researches, but further the political aims which were then being formulated in his active mind.

The variety and scope of his work at this time was in itself extraordinary. He possessed in a high degree that unique gift of Elizabethan scholars for embracing a wide range of subjects and types of work and achieving success in most of them. He had studied civil law on the continent as well as in England, he had written *Mercurius Coelestis* in which he had expounded in terms of Neo-Platonism that Mercury was the symbol of the "divine reason" of things. His geographical and navigational

works were as practical and constructive as his astrological-philosophical tracts were fanciful. It was almost entirely through Dee, with the assistance of Humphrey Cole, that the English mathematical instruments-making industry was launched and laid the foundations for the voyages of discovery some ten years later. He was swift to spot the errors of earlier scholars and wrote in the margin of Peter Perigrinus's book on navigation that Perigrinus was "wrong in supposing that the needle sought the celestial pole; it turned to the magnetic pole."¹ His eager pen ranged from geography and navigation to ship-building, from mathematics and philosophy to metaphysics, from a new mode of propagating the Gospel in America to optics, astrology and medicine.

Medicine was no mere sideline with him. It is true that he sought out the more unorthodox medicos of his day and seemed to hold a belief in faith-healing, but he had also studied medicine seriously on the continent. One of the stranger medicos with whom he came in contact was Jerome Cardan, the famous physician of Padua, who visited England in 1552 and stayed at Sir John Cheke's house. Cardan was an occultist belonging to the Padua school of necromantic art, so called, but he had a keen intellect and his reputation was high enough even in England for him to be invited to prescribe for the boy King whose health was even then causing anxiety at Court. Astrology was then a recognised aid to medicine and Cardan drew up a horoscope for Edward VI. His final report on the King's health was cautious, but gave a clear warning. Edward VI, he said, was threatened with grave illnesses; if these could be prevented, he might live to an old age. But to Cheke and Dee he seems to have conveyed his innermost thoughts about Edward and hinted that his days were numbered. In fact Edward VI died soon after Cardan left the country.

Cardan had a great influence on Dee and encouraged him to pursue his studies of the occult. He shared with Dee a belief in faith-healing and the power of mind over body, claiming that he had supernormal powers which enabled him to project his soul out of his body. But he also proclaimed witchcraft to be a form

of insanity and in his own profession of medicine actually propounded many methods and theories which more than a century later became accepted practice. Cardan had clairvoyant vision, practised divination and had prophetic dreams, believing that he was guided by a spirit who gave him counsel.

But despite his attempt to explain that he was not a conjuror of demons, his contemporaries still suspected Dee. He enthused about the "mechanical marvels" which were even then being produced on the continent and, as his countrymen had not seen these toys and certainly could not visualise them, they looked upon him as the dupe of magicians. He spoke of "an insect of iron", which he had seen at a party in Nuremberg, flitting along the table among the guests. Dee had a passion for mechanical toys.

Frances A. Yates in *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, making a modern assessment of Dee, published in 1964, paid this tribute to the man: "John Dee was a genuine mathematician of considerable importance, intensely interested in all mathematical studies and in the application of mathematics to produce results in applied sciences. He himself was a practical scientist and inventor, his activities in this field being many and varied."

But to put into perspective the apparent contradictions between Dee the mathematician and scientist and Dee the student of the occult one must grasp the significance of "real artificial magic" in the context of the Renaissance Magus and Cabbala. It was a case of the man of genius tilting at windmills, of the precise mind, impatient to probe the hidden mysteries of life and the nature of the universe, experimenting with the science of numbers in the unknown world of "religious magic".

About this time Dee became a prolific caster of horoscopes. His private diaries contain many references to these. There are such entries as this for 12 October, 1552: "The Lord Willughby, born *hora septima mane, ante meridiem*, Lat. 50° 30' at Wessell in Gelderland." There is another for "Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, *hora 2 min. 9 Exoniae mane*." We also learn of "Mrs. Brigit Cooke, borne abowt seven of the clok on Saynt

David's Day, which is the first day of March, being Wensday; but I cannot yet lerne whether it was before none or after. But she thinketh herself to be but 27 yeres old...but it cannot be so."²

Presumably Tudor women could be just as coy about their ages as those of today.

The patronage of the Northumberland's did not last long. The proclamation of Lady Jane Grey as Queen, following the death of the boy King, was doomed to failure. Northumberland's scanty forces and lukewarm allies were no match for the thousands who misguidedly flocked to the support of Mary Tudor. Northumberland was executed and Mary was crowned. So the least typical of the Tudors allied herself with Spain, against England's old enemy, France, and once again the kingdom became Catholic. This must have been a harsh blow to Dee, who, though tolerant and unbigoted and the friend of many Catholics, was on the side of the Radicals and Protestants in private thought, if not yet in public deed. Yet the new Queen appeared to be well disposed to him at first. She let it be known that she would not only patronise his learning, but wished him to draw her horoscope and that of her prospective bridegroom, Philip of Spain.

This in no way changed Dee's mind about the direction in which English policy had changed. He was gravely disturbed at the turn of events and the prospect of an alliance with Spain. While accepting Mary's favours he was already concentrating his long-term hopes on her sister, the Princess Elizabeth, and immediately sought means of communicating with her. No man saw more clearly the horrors of the Marian persecution which lay ahead, a holocaust of death which resulted in an average of ninety persons being executed each year of her reign for their Protestant beliefs. Elizabeth's own position was that of an uneasy observer of events in her semi-captivity at Woodstock. With spies everywhere and a close watch kept on all visitors, it was no easy task even to correspond with the Princess.

But Dee had as close ties with those in Elizabeth's entourage as with those of Queen Mary. He was a cousin of the elderly Blanche Parry, who had nursed Elizabeth as a child in arms,

as well as James Parry, the royal huntsman. Blanche held the position of confidential maid-of-honour to the Princess. Through her, and with the connivance of other of her servants, Dee sent letters to Elizabeth.

The quiet scholar kept out of active politics, but his abhorrence of what he saw was the fate of so many old friends made him fear for the life of the young Princess. Fortunately for him he was also on good terms with others who secretly sympathised with the exile at Woodstock, Sir William Cecil, Sir John Cheke and William Aubrey. So the young Astrologer-Royal drew horoscopes both for his royal mistress and her sister and the latter consulted him through her maid-of-honour, who was a discreet go-between. One can only assume that Dee was convinced in his own mind that the Marian terror could not last for ever and that he deliberately hitched his star to a belief in the exiled Princess. For he set out to comfort, teach, guide and encourage Elizabeth, perhaps, by implication, planting in her own mind a belief that she would ultimately reign over England.

He encouraged her interest in astrology and clairvoyance, an unexpected trait in the character of this otherwise intensely practical young woman. He suggested she should learn a system of shorthand which he had only recently invented and urged the advisability of communications in codes which could not easily be broken, or even suspected. No man could have been more concerned for her welfare and he made constant proposals for safeguarding her health, advising on herbs and medicines even though he had never qualified as a physician. The young Princess was fascinated by this man and enthralled with his fund of knowledge. He told her how he had noted on his travels that the medicinal herbs planted by the Romans were still growing along Hadrian's Wall. It was his influence in interesting Elizabeth in astronomy that led to her life-long interest in this subject. This is clearly shown by her two astrolabes: a navigational astrolabe made for her by Germinus, a superb piece of craftsmanship, with a gilt star-map, showing twenty-nine stars, and an astrological astrolabe, undated, but believed to have been made for her from Dee's instructions.

The horoscope Dee drew for her is in the British Museum. There is nothing in it that could possibly suggest witchcraft, or demonic magic. Its introductory preamble is positively religious in tone and follows closely to the Christian creed. There is detailed information on the anatomy of the human body which, though linked with astrology, is remarkably accurate in the light of modern knowledge, and a carefully planned list of diets for each month of the year. It was perhaps only natural that Elizabeth should wish to know what the stars predicted for her future and whether Dee could allay her fears or raise her hopes. While keeping rather strictly to the traits of characters and tendencies of those born under Elizabeth's sign of the zodiac—Virgo (the Ministering Angel)—he appears to have given her cause for optimism, though to have hinted at grave dangers at certain moments of her life.

Dee had a premonition that Elizabeth would never marry, and he seems generally to have acted on this hunch. But this may have been due to the fact that in astrological readings the sign of Virgo represents the spinster and that those born in this period—22 August to 22 September—often tend not to marry. Virgos are said to be people who like to keep their feet on the ground and face reality, which certainly applied to Elizabeth, as did another of their traits, using work as an escape from life. Elizabeth was also intensely studious and loved learning; she mistrusted sentimental passions and emotions; she took great interest in her health and tried to maintain a high standard of physical fitness. All these are Virgo traits and Dee was able to explain them to her. Doubtless his detailed diets were specially drawn up because he knew that Virgos were preoccupied with their health, that they dearly love to go on a special diet if they think it will do them good.

Possibly Elizabeth asked to see the horoscope of her sister. At any rate, somewhat rashly, Dee showed it to her and even discussed the contrasting aspects of the planets in the two maps. This in Tudor days was in itself almost tantamount to treason. At least it was enough to produce whispers about "black magic".

Inevitably this led to trouble. Somebody learned of these dis-

cussions and then discovered that Dee had been corresponding regularly with the Princess through letters addressed to her servants. The wildest charges were made against Dee. Two informers, Ferrys and Prideaux, accused him of an attempt to take Queen Mary's life by poison or black magic. There was a story that he had bewitched children and cast spells on the Queen. During the spring of 1555 certain members of the Princess Elizabeth's household at Woodstock were accused of witchcraft "for that they did calculate the King's, the Queen's and My Lady Elizabeth's horoscopes are accused that they should have a familiar spirit, which is the more suspected, for that Ferrys, one of their accusers, had immediately on the accusation, both of his children stricken, the one with death, the other with blindness." Such was the account given in a letter from Thomas Martin to the Earl of Courtenay.³

Dee was seized at Hampton Court just before the Princess Elizabeth was imprisoned there. His lodgings in London were searched and his papers examined. He was immediately charged with treason and the outlook must have seemed bleak indeed, for, with his previous record as a suspected conjuror and heretic, his case was prejudiced from the start. But in this hour of trial one gets a glimpse of Dee as the steel-nerved secret agent of later years, already well versed in how to cover his tracks and able to put a bold and unblenching face on charges of such a serious character. Dee's only indiscretion had been to show the Princess the Queen's horoscope. The mistake his enemies had made was in failing to concentrate on this indiscretion and making wild allegations which could not possibly be substantiated. He was acquitted by the Star Chamber on the charge of treason and discharged—not, however, to freedom, but to the custody of Bishop Bonner of London, who was commanded to examine him respecting matters of religion. Meanwhile his lodgings in London were sealed up.

He was fortunate to have escaped the flames and it was one of the few good deeds that can be noted to Mary's credit that she fully recognised there was no substantial evidence against Dee and that she remained, outwardly at least, friendly disposed

towards him. Though he held only tenuously to the Catholic faith in which he had been brought up, he bore no malice to Catholics as such, only an aversion to religious persecution and to the threat of Spanish dominance which Mary's wooing of Philip of Spain seemed to foreshadow.

Dee's incarceration in the prison of the Bishop of London was hardly the treatment one would have expected towards a man who had been acquitted of the charge against him. He was shut up in a bare cell and made to share this small space, and even his bed, with one Barthlet Green, a deeply religious man but a suspected heretic to whom Dee showed the greatest sympathy. That sympathy might easily have been the undoing of Dee, for Green was shortly dragged out of his cell to be burned at the stake. But Bishop Bonner was eventually, though somewhat reluctantly convinced that Dee was no heretic. The latter's scholarship, his deep understanding of divinity and his devout and dignified bearing seem to have won Bonner's confidence in the end. There is even a suggestion that Dee assisted the Bishop to examine some of the other heretics, but this would seem rather an unlikely story. When examined in prison by John Philpot on Bonner's behalf, Dee quoted St. Cyprian and Philpot somewhat tartly replied: "Master Dee, you are too young in divinity to teach me in the matter of my faith, though you be more learned in other things."

Later in 1555 Dee was released from prison and he must have had reason to believe he was restored to favour in Mary's eyes, for on 15 January, 1556, he presented a supplication to the Queen "for the recovery and preservation of ancient writers and monuments." This, in effect, was a plea for the founding of a State National Library and the petition was followed by five articles detailing his plans for a "Library Royall".

Here again Dee's foresight was remarkable, but he was too far in advance of his times for his plea to have much effect. It is worth noting that Dee put forward his plan half a century before Thomas Bodley created his vast library and that his ideas were not fully accepted until Queen Victoria's reign when the Historical Manuscript Commission was created. Yet what Dee proposed

in 1556 would have given Tudor England a combination of the Bodleian Library, the British Museum, as we know it today, an Ancient Monuments Commission and something very like a miniature National Trust combined in one. It might well have revolutionised England's heritage, not to mention that of Wales, in which he was equally interested.

His motives in putting forward this tremendous project were wholly patriotic. His visits to the continent had saddened him when he compared the splendid libraries set up in those countries with the lack of them in England. He had seen the terrible destruction of priceless treasures and manuscripts which followed the Reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries, with the priceless treasures of these buildings either burned or buried. This was something he wanted to put right.

His petition to the Queen demanded the setting up of a Commission to inquire into what valuable manuscripts and treasures still existed, to gather evidence of where they were buried or hidden, with powers for copies to be made of manuscripts. The Commission, he urged, should be set up without delay and get to work at once, in case a deliberate attempt was made to hide or make away with treasures, some of which, he suspected, were in danger of going abroad. There were some owners of valuable relics, he declared, who "are not sincere lovers of good learning because they will not share them with others."

His plan was sound enough, but it meant spending money. Dee's proposal was that expenses should be borne by the Lord Cardinal of the Synod of the Province of Canterbury and he suggested that he personally should be commissioned to procure copies of many celebrated manuscript volumes from the Vatican, St. Mark's at Venice, Florence and Vienna. He showed that he had already made a lengthy catalogue of all such works which he considered worthy of copying.

It was a magnificent scheme, worked out in great detail, but nothing came of it. The greybeards at Court were in no mood to consider the financing of the project and doubtless many whispered to Mary that this might be a subtle plan for introducing heretical works into the country.

So Dee was forced to abandon a project after his own heart and to continue building up his own library, already vast, much larger in fact than his purse would allow. Books had always been his extravagance and his diaries frequently bear testimony to this. Often he borrowed money for the express intention of buying books, even pawning glass and silver for the same purpose.

His personal library included not only an enormous collection of books, but documents and manuscripts. He even employed a clerk to copy out manuscripts for him, though he did much copying himself—of all “works of importance or secrecie”, he stated.

For the remainder of Mary’s turbulent reign he lived peacefully and unostentatiously in relative obscurity. He was so secretive about his life at this time that there is no record of where he then lived. Possibly he was engaged in some secret missions, though his links with the Princess Elizabeth were now tenuous. He pursued his studies unhindered, eked out a sparse living from his rectorships and added to his income by drawing horoscopes and giving advice to all kinds of people, some wealthy and many more from the poorer classes.

Meanwhile his reputation abroad remained high and he continued to conduct correspondence with many scholars on the continent. In 1557 John Feild published an ephemeris, *A Revision of the Pruntenic Tablets of Rheinhold*. Dee wrote a preface for this work, urging that more attention should be paid to the three astronomers, Copernicus, Reticus and Rheinhold. Dee said that the old astronomical tables and canons no longer agreed with the phenomena and that this fact alone should encourage a closer study of the new hypotheses. But he was well aware of the lack of evidence in support of the new views and refused to be dogmatic on the subject. He censured those who continued to issue Ephemerides based on antiquated canons which were then, twelve and thirteen degrees wrong as to the position of Mercury.

Certainly he was one of the earliest advocates of the Copernican theory and the astronomical system which bore his name.

He also demonstrated that recent comets were far above and beyond the moon, despite a general belief that the earlier comets of 1532 and 1517 existed below the moon. Richard Forster wrote in *Meteorographical Ephemerides* in 1575 that "astronomy, which in England, first began to revive and emerge from darkness into light through the efforts of John Dee, keen champion of new hypotheses and Ptolamaic Theory, will, as a result of the interference of unskilled persons, go to ruin with the heavens of Copernicus and Rheinhold unless Dee again interposes his Atlantean shoulders."

Dee continued to write prolifically during these last years of Mary's reign. Between 1556 and 1558 he produced books and tracts on subjects such as astronomical instruments, mechanics, optics and a treatise on pulleys and cog wheels. He aimed at producing a machine which would move great weights with the minimum of effort and his pulley system, though in a crude form, was widely used later in the sixteenth century.

In optical science he was not merely in advance of his contemporaries, but in theory at least thinking on the same lines as some scientists in the twentieth century and even, in one instance, on ideas not yet fully developed. Within the last few years American military scientists have been working out plans for the use of giant "burning glasses" to implement a scorched earth policy and for the projection of a giant mirror in the sky to turn night into day. Indeed, the last-named project was seriously put forward for use in the Vietnam jungles. Dee submitted both ideas to act as aids to military power, though he was modest enough to admit that Roger Bacon had stimulated some of his thinking on "burning glasses".

Mirrors fascinated Dee and his belief in the power of mirrors showed that in a strange, mystical way he was centuries ahead of other scientists. He had a theory that powerful mirrors, specially constructed, could be used for drawing magical power from the sun to transmit messages and objects to the stars and other worlds. Unquestionably Dee was delving into realms of fantasy from the world of fact, but his imaginative powers, allied to his scientific knowledge, enabled him to make an uncanny,

mental leap into the twentieth century. For in 1966 an American scientist produced a paper suggesting that a giant mirror projected into outer space to draw power from the sun and convert it into fuel could propel a space ship to the stars at a speed vastly in excess of the speed of light.

Dee was also preoccupied with theories on the speed of light and was for some years interested in the idea of a mirror propelled into space at a speed higher than that of light being able to reveal to man all the events of the past by a process of reflection. All this was based on his theory, since abundantly proved, that the images of some of the stars we could see in the firmament took more than fifty years to reach viewers on earth.

The importance of Dee in the light of modern science lies not so much in his pioneering work, important though that was, as in his ability to bring an imaginatively stimulated classical mind to probe beyond the narrow confines of *a priori* fact. In this respect he had all the qualities of the most outstanding men of the Renaissance period, owing more to the spirit of the Renaissance Magus and Neo-Platonism than to any formal education. Perhaps only when another Renaissance dawns, when scholars cease to specialise and limit their field of research, will there be similar progress in the spheres of science. Certain it is that, though the following century saw a consolidation in the scientific field of the discoveries of the sixteenth century, the impetus towards more ambitious goals was lost. Slowly, the wings of the scientists were clipped by method and specialisation; the soaring, poetic, visionary scientific eagles of the Renaissance were superseded by the pragmatic professionals. Much was gained in improved method and more logical approach, but much also was lost by lack of vision, of that divine spark of creative imagination which the men of the Renaissance possessed.

In retrospect the Renaissance scientific and philosophical scholars—and Dee among them—were often closer to the questing minds of Einstein, to the theories of Dunne and Lodge and to the still undiscovered secrets of space and time than any scientists of the seventeenth, eighteenth and even the nineteenth centuries. The pseudo-scientific doctrine of the Fourth Dimension partly

originated in Dee's theories of a multitude of planes of existence, all occupying the same space, but not interfering with one another. What Einstein approached through mathematics Dee fortuitously, if you like, arrived at through a process of natural magic, then working backwards and demonstrating that what was established by magic was equated by mathematical test. Or, so he would have us believe. Not for some centuries was anyone else seriously to attempt to carry these ideas further. Then Professor Johann F. C. Zollner of Leipzig attempted the task. But he merely confused the somewhat theosophical ideas of Dee and other Renaissance scholars with the mathematician's view of a Fourth Dimension. He progressed only a little further than Dee himself and became mad in the process.

Charles H. Hinton (1853-1907) developed the same idea and tried to adopt the concept as a basis for faith and morality. This was retracing the same path as Dee and his arguments were almost typically "magical". He claimed that to a two-dimensional creature we, whose bodies have three dimensions, would seem incomprehensible. Thus, he argued, just as we find concepts of a four-dimensional creature hard to grasp, so, too, are the ideas of God and eternity. Hinton wrote several books on this theme and published a novel entitled *An Episode in Flatland*, about animated triangles.

And even with the dawn of the twentieth century the four-dimensional scientists were not so very much further advanced than Dee, and, significantly, most of them had occult leanings like Dee. There was the Russian occultist, Ouspensky, who asserted that time was a spiral and thought that space had six linear dimensions. Ouspensky paid special tribute to Dee, saying that it was Dee who had shown that "the philosophy of relativity had proved conclusively that God does not play His part from outside the universe, but that in actuality this Spirit exists in the co-existence of space and time." John W. Dunne, an R.F.C. officer and airplane designer and a man also with occult leanings, carried Dee's ideas still further in 1927 when he undertook to explain prophetic dreams. Dunne asserted that, when sleeping, man "moved along" the Fourth Dimension of time, giving a

modern version of the old philosophical notion, also held by Dee, that every event, past, present and future, co-exists in an "eternal now", or, as Oliver Lodge put it:

*But with the Nameless is nor Day nor Hour;
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought,
Break in to 'Thens' and 'Whens' the Eternal Now.*

Dee held that dreams and going into a trance enabled a man with specially developed gifts to see past and future events as if they were present happenings. Charles Kingsley induced similar trances by going on long walks. But, ironically, Dee seemed to lack any special gift for achieving significant dreams, nor did he find any such simple device as did Kingsley for inducing trances. He had many dreams and he duly recorded them, but for the most part they make humdrum reading. Perhaps this is a measure of the man's honesty; there are no exaggerated claims made for his own dreams. There seem to have been some periods of his life when he had more dreams than others and possibly in a few of these periods the dreams took on more significance, if carefully examined. Some were recorded in English, some in cipher and others in Greek and Latin. One dream he describes as being of himself "...naked, and my skyn all overwrought with work like some kinde of tuft mockado, with crosses blew and red; and on my left arme, above the arme, in a wreath, this word I red—*sine me nihil potestis facere*; and another the same night of Mr. Secretary Walsingham, Mr. Candish and myself."⁴

He was also consulted about other people's dreams. On one occasion he noted that "Harry Prise of Lewsham" came to him and "tolde of his dreames often repeated... and upon my prayer to God this night his dreame was confirmed and better instructions given."⁵

MAGIC DEFINED

IN THE sixteenth century magic, as far as the general public was concerned, embraced both scientific experiment and superstitious pacts with the Devil. The man-in-the-street made little distinction between one and the other.

Even in the ranks of the scholars of Tudor England there was only a rather vague understanding of what the continental exponents of natural magic were trying to say. John Dee, however, set out to define clearly and simply—much more simply than the complex Neo-Platonic language of most Renaissance occultists—the three types of what he regarded as legitimate or “white magic.” These were:

1. Natural Magic: “the force above human reason which is the active principle in nature.” Dee explained that this was the art of controlling the powers of nature, as, for example, the production of a plant from a seed.

2. Mathematical Magic: this was the means of applying mathematical processes to the construction of mechanical things and, under this heading, came many inventions of man.

3. Thaumaturge, or Divine Magic. This was only achieved by a scholar who understood and studied deeply both natural and mathematical magic and wished to probe further into the secrets of the universe. This latter quest he defined as the search for the “communion with goode angels by purifyinge of the soul.” But he warned that such a search could be foolish and dangerous if attempted by ignorant or unscrupulous people. He believed in astrology, which he found mathematically accurate and satisfying,

and thought that through astrology one could interpret by means of symbols real spiritual truths and trends. Through contemplation of the symbols of celestial bodies he believed that the mind could absorb something of divine power.¹

These ideas were positively developed in a number of works written between 1557 and 1560. In making his definitions Dee was more direct, less circumlocutory than the Renaissance occultists. It was only when he talked and wrote in symbols that, like most occultists, he occasionally became obscure. His approach to all the arts was revolutionary for he was emphatic that "there is no arte or crafte that has been built up without proportion and proportion is based on number, so that everie arte is a system composed of apprehensions and system's number." It is useless, as so many modern interpreters of natural magic have tried to do, to present such abstract meanderings literally. One must apply the ideas of Dee in the light of what we have learned since to explain them. Thus, true art to Dee involved an appreciation of mathematical principles, whether it was music, painting or sculpting, and he insisted that the test for "the divine inspiration of the artist" was whether it was mathematically true.

Dee was anticipating the advanced art criticism which appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century and sought to find a divine unity in creative art. Dee saw in art the kind of unity which Piero della Francesca achieved consciously in his paintings. That is the best modern interpretation of Dee's views on art. It is the unity glimpsed in something that has been momentarily isolated from the flow of time. Francesca studied the principle of relativity applied to space and time in painting. He succeeded in finding the unity of Beauty by a mathematical process. In short, the unity of art in this concept is the locus of two events in our consciousness. One can again see Dee's theories exemplified in Pao Ucelli's *Rout of San Romano*. A geometrical examination of that picture reveals orderly parallel lines and neatly arranged angles as the basis of a simple, but brilliant colour scheme. Event one is the static effect of these lines and angles upon the mind: the battlefield is a nursery of toy soldiers. Event two is the

extension of event one in terms of duration. The locus is in the corpse on the battlefield—the foreshortened body.

Similarly in music: in Dvorak's *Humoresque* variety, colour and form are produced from an effortlessly mathematical arrangement of two notes. Dee considered that numerology provided the basis for all great music because "what was mathematicall was divine and what was divine was mathematicall and the transfusion of both created the flame which is knowne as beauty."

Yet, despite the fact that he was now accepted as a serious scholar and scientist by other scholars in his own country and by many learned men overseas, to the man-in-the-street he was a "wizard". This at least is understandable in an age when any probing into the unknown was heretical and necromantic to the ordinary person. What however tended to inflame the populace against Dee was not so much his philosophising, which they could not understand, but the mechanical toys and devices which he made, in all innocence, for amusement. Dee's idea was that if he produced marvellous mechanical toys which would entertain people, they would be more likely to take his other work seriously. Often the reverse was true. He was somewhat of a practical joker; he delighted in showing people his distorting mirrors in which fat men became thin and thin men fat. While on the continent he supervised the making of some remarkable toys which he brought back to England. These were an owl, a jay and a raven, each of which was four times the natural size of the bird. They possessed the natural plumage of the birds, but inside each was a mechanical device which produced the appropriate cry or screech of owl, jay and raven respectively. A Dutch horologist, a German instrument-maker and a Frenchman, who specialised in making imitation eyes, assisted Dee in creating these toys. They must have cost him a large amount of money.

Not unnaturally when neighbours heard the screeching of these "birds", after they had been wound up, and saw their flashing glaring eyes, uncannily realistic, they immediately saw the toys as the weapons of black magic and thought Dee was putting a spell on them.

Much less excusable has been the treatment to which Dee has

been subjected since his death. In 1659 Meric Casaubon published *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Years Between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits*, based on Dee's recorded "angelic conversations". These "conversations" belong to a later period of his life and will be discussed in another part of this book, but it is important at this stage to appreciate how Casaubon did so much to distort Dee's image and to misrepresent him by taking certain passages of his works and diaries out of context. The Casaubon thesis was that Dee was deluded by devils and little better than a black magician.

Yet even more inexcusably this misrepresentation continued in succeeding centuries and exaggerated Dee's characteristics and invented many others he did not possess so that an utterly false picture of a Faustian figure emerged. He was damned by Samuel Butler and Walpole, his manuscripts were re-discovered by the Victorians, such as Mackay, and used to depict a wicked, money-grabbing charlatan who hoodwinked Queen Elizabeth into believing he could manufacture gold. He was adopted by some of the Rosicrucians, which did not improve his reputation; he became the "lost hero" of the eccentric Lord Tredegar in this century, and, perhaps most damning of all, was plagiarised and invoked by the "Great Beast" himself, Aleister Crowley.

But it was neither in black magic, nor in fortune-telling, neither in deceit, nor devilish invention that Dee sought his inspiration. Aristotle, Plato and the Bible were his chief influences outside the world of science. His *Zographie* (1557) concerned radiation, light and colours and he made his mathematical observations by means of geometrical calculations and prisms. It was abstract and sometimes obscure, but its full worth has been appreciated by one modern scholar, Lynn Thorndike, who, in his *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, wrote that "for John Dee the world was a lyre from which a skilful player could draw new harmonies. Every thing and place in the world radiated force to all other parts and received rays from them. There were also relations of sympathy and antipathy between things. Species, both spiritual and natural, flowed off from objects with light or without it, impressing themselves not only on the sight, but the

other senses, and especially coalescing in our imaginative spirit and working marvels in us. Moreover the human soul and the specific form of every thing has many more virtues and operations than has the human body, or the matter of the thing in question. Similarly the invisible rays of the planets or their secret influence surpass their sensible rays of light. Dee stressed the influence of the stars in various other passages and believed that each star had its own nature. He affirmed that a person skilled in catoptric could by art impress the rays of each star more strongly than nature can, and that this was the main feature of the natural magic of the ancient sages. His attempted experiments with angels were in accord with his attributing greater operations to soul than body and with his semi-spiritual view of nature."

It was both a weakness and a strength of Dee that he repeatedly checked contemporary Renaissance thought on these subjects with the beliefs and concepts of the ancients. Thus he plumbed the Talmudic mysteries as well as the Renaissance marvels, Druidic lore and astronomy as well as the Ptolomaic theory and the ideas of Copernicus. This was a strength in that it denoted his thoroughness and anxiety to see where his contemporaries may have missed a point, but it also led him into some unproductive by-paths of philosophy and science.

He vindicated Roger Bacon with a work published in 1558, doing much to offset violent criticism of Bacon ten years previously, when he was condemned as a magician. Again, Dee anticipated the law of Conservation of Matter in his *Propaideumata Aphoristica* (1558) when he propounded the theory that creation was contrary to reason and natural law and that therefore nature was not miraculous but subject to laws, only God and the Creation being miraculous.

Never once did Dee allow his studies to divert him from his political ambitions. Few scholars possessed such a gift of being able to switch from theory to practice so easily and just as Dee could turn his attention from abstract thought to the creation of some mechanical device, so also he could divert his talents to the creation of a competitive, aggressive and epoch-leading England.

He did not seek office—indeed none would have been open to him in Mary's reign—but he sought to influence political affairs behind the scenes. He was the radical, would-be empire-builder, anxious to equip his native country with the know-how to embark on voyages of discovery.

During the last months of Mary's reign he had little opportunity of pressing these views forward, but he kept in close touch with Cecil and, again through Blanche Parry, with the Princess Elizabeth. He never doubted that Elizabeth would come into her own and both his horoscopes and his cheerful prognostications must have given the Princess encouragement when all around her seemed dark and uncertain. Dee detested the alliance with Spain, brought about through the marriage of Mary and Philip. He regarded it as both unnatural and unrealistic. Philip had married Mary, not through love, but solely to bring England into the Hapsburg combination. By so doing he had forced France into alliance with the enemies of Mary. Sterile, religiously obsessed, un-Tudorlike Mary had allowed herself to become the tool of a foreign power and ruler of the nation with a policy utterly at odds with the popular will. The more she clung to the precepts of Rome and the Spanish alliance, the more the masses sighed for independence and freedom from an alliance with any European nation. They might easily have accepted a return to Catholicism alone, but Catholicism and Spanish domination was more than they could swallow.

Even as it was apparent that Mary was dying, so Dee kept the Princess Elizabeth informed of all developments, both at home and on the continent. Already he was, as William Lilly declared, "Elizabeth's Intelligencer . . . a ready witted man, quick of apprehension . . . a perfect astronomer, a curious astrologer; to speak truth, he was excellent in all kinds of learning."²

When Mary died in 1558 and Elizabeth became Queen, remembering the horoscopes Dee had already drawn for her, the new Sovereign asked Lord Robert Dudley (later the Earl of Leicester) to see Dee privately to ask him to cast a date that would be propitious for her crowning. To what extent Elizabeth attached importance to astrology is uncertain, but it is clear that

she paid great attention to what Dee said and thought. It is more than likely that on this occasion she was using astrology as a form of public relations to augment the new reign. It must be remembered that her very accession to the throne was in doubt before she was crowned. In Catholic eyes she was the child of an unlawful union, the daughter of Anne Boleyn, the prime cause of her father's excommunication by Rome. At the Vatican the French Ambassador was actually urging the Pope to denounce her. Spanish influence, and particularly that of Philip, alone protected her coronation. What was needed, desperately needed, was some kind of good omen to mark the beginning of a new era. What better than the horoscope of John Dee?

The Protestants were waiting for just such a sign, though not perhaps an astrological one. "The Lord has caused a new star to arise," they cried; "now is the time for Jerusalem to be built again in that kingdom, that the blood of so many martyrs, so largely shed, be not in vain."

Before her coronation Elizabeth busied herself in wooing the people. She, above all monarchs before or since, believed in the people; she echoed the words of Lord Randolph Churchill three centuries later: "Trust the people." She really loved the people of all classes and instinctively trusted their down-to-earth opinions. Meanwhile Dee worked out an astrological calculation and named Sunday, 15 January, as the best date. It was duly accepted by the Queen.

Coronation Day was a resounding success; the ritual of her presentation to the people was carried out amid a deafening noise of organs, trumpets, drums, fifes and bells, and the Queen, who delighted in informality, moved among her people with many little friendly gestures to individuals in the crowd. This display of democratic feeling shocked the Mantuan envoy who commented that in his opinion the new Queen "exceeded the bounds of gravity and decorum."

Dee was still anxious to remain independent, to be free to develop all his ideas and theories. Though offered ecclesiastical preference, he refused, preferring to remain a free-lance adviser to the Crown. Possibly one reason for this was his desire to

advance in every possible way England's claims to being an imperial power. He was, like all radicals of his period, devoted to the concept of building for England a mighty empire out of the new lands overseas. In the two previous reigns English adventurers had voyaged to Barbary and Guinea, but now the emphasis was on competing with Spain in seeking out new lands in the west. A young Bristol seaman, Richard Chancellor, had been chosen as the chief pilot for Arctic exploration and the theoretical and astronomical training of Chancellor had originally been put in the hands of John Dee by the sons of the Duke of Northumberland. Dee made a giant quadrant specially for Chancellor to take sun sights for new declination tables. Thus Dee played a leading role in planning Chancellor's opening up of White Sea routes and the two brothers, Stephen and William Borough, who were also among the band of explorer-seamen, were likewise pupils of Dee.

But once again whispers of witchcraft were heard and in the first year of Elizabeth's reign there were a number of outbursts against necromancy. Sir Anthony Fortescue, a member of a well-known Catholic family, was, with accomplices, charged with casting the Queen's horoscopes. He was acquitted for lack of evidence, but three years later was involved in an infamous plot which involved the Ambassadors of France and Spain. Two conjurors, employed by Sir Anthony, "aided by a wicked spryte drawne from the depths of hell" had made the "discovery" that the Queen was about to die.

Here, without doubt, necromancy was mixed up with politics and employed solely for political ends, but Dee must have been worried all the same, even though his record of loyalty was unquestioned. But another cause of the outburst of witch-hunting was that Lord Robert Dudley's name was associated with necromancy. Already this tall, handsome, mysterious and ambitious favourite had aroused jealousy and hatred because of his closeness to the Queen. Few famous men have been so maligned in their life-time and it is a measure of his greatness that he was able to rise above the slanders and confound his critics. He was accused of all kinds of evils and vices by his enemies. "What a monster of

a man was Leycester, who first brought the art of poysoning into England", wrote Howell in his *Letters*. The rumours against him grew in number and absurdity: he practised incest, unnatural vice and all manner of perversions and, according to Edmund Bohun, "gave himself up entirely to the exercise of a most wicked and universal luxury...and brought into England from foreign countries many new and unheard of pleasures... he would drink dissolved pearls and amber to excite his lust."

Doubtless some of the rumours had some foundation, but in the main they were utterly untrue. Legend, aided by the fiction of Sir Walter Scott, had it that he murdered his first wife, Amy Robsart, but the jury found she had died through an accident. Again he was said to have poisoned Cardinal Chatillon and Sir Nicholas Throckmorton as well as having tried to kill the French envoy, Simier, because he was jealous of the latter's influence with the Queen. But few of these stories bear much investigation. There was, for example, the report that he "procured through witchcraft an artificial catarrh" which caused the death of Lord Sheffield by stopping his breath, and that he did this in order to marry his wife. The originator of this fanciful tale was an old woman, said to be more than a hundred years old, who had lost her memory. There is no proof that Dudley married the widow, though she did bear him a son.

It is not necessary to look far, however, for the origin of the witchcraft legends. Dudley's close association with Dee was responsible in no small measure for this. His enemies claimed that he employed Dee to forward his nefarious schemes and that he was himself "the companion of witches". It was widely believed that Dee was used by Dudley, together with Drs. Allen, Bayly, Culpeper, Lopez and Julio—"once Papists, now Galenists, poysoners so subtle that they can make a man die of any sickness as long after as they like"³—to cast horoscopes and cast spells.

The agitation against witchcraft increased in the early years of Elizabeth's reign and Bishop Jewell preached a sermon in the Queen's presence, denouncing the evil, hinting at Dudley, though not naming him, and demanding the death penalty for all who

dabbled in it. "It may please Your Grace to understand that this kind of people, within these last few years, are marvellously increased within your realm," said the Bishop. "These eyes have seen most evident and manifest marks of their wickedness. Your Grace's subjects pine away, even unto death, their colour fadeth, their flesh rotteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft. Wherefore your poor subjects' most humble petition unto Your Highness is that the laws touching such malefactors be put into execution."

Eliphas Levi in his *History of Magic* gave a typical view of how necromancy was regarded in these times. "Black magic," he wrote, "may be defined as the art of inducing artificial mania in ourselves and in others, but it is also and above all the science of poisoning."

Naturally all astrologers and even practitioners in "white magic" were disturbed by this atmosphere of suspicion and witch-hunting. The enactment of the Statute against Sorcery, a re-enactment of a former statute of Henry VIII's reign, must have been one reason for Dee wishing to leave the country. A man who had twice been accused of witchcraft practices and once narrowly escaped with his life from a charge of treason arising out of these could only look upon the tendency to link genuine scientists with necromancy with dismay.

Apart from this Dee was anxious to strengthen his hand in presenting plans for colonisation by travelling himself and being able to convince the Queen by first hand evidence. His attachment to his Sovereign was sincere and self-effacing and he was always happy to carry out personal inquiries on her behalf even when these brought him no special reward. But Elizabeth had the tight-fistedness of all the Tudors and her astrologer's services do not seem to have been greatly rewarded in these early days of her reign. Not outwardly, at least, despite the fact that when Elizabeth came to the throne she told Dee that "where her brother had given him a crown, she would give him a noble. Preferments which Dee sought were given to others and some which he was offered did not suit him. He was not an easy man to fit into lay ecclesiastical appointments as he always insisted he

did not want a living which involved the cure of souls, "for this did terrifie me." Inhibitions about being suspected of magical practices may have had something to do with this fear. The mastership of St. Catherine's Hospital was promised him, but, Dee noted, "Dr. Wilson [Secretary Wilson] politickly prevented me."

But the picture of a grudging Sovereign and of a selfless patriot eking out his existence in semi-penury is rather superficial and by no means borne out by all authorities. In public the Queen was content to recognise Dee, but not to elevate him to a position in which he would seem to be all powerful. Not even the Queen herself could afford to make a suspected "magician" too obviously a key figure in her entourage. She needed to be circumspect and not outwardly to reward him too generously. But in private she may well have been much more generous to him than she was officially. Charlotte Fell Smith in her study of Dee expressed the view that the Queen "felt it necessary to keep him [Dee] within reach of herself" and that this "may have been one reason for not giving him the appointments for which he and others for him constantly sued."

If he had been given more preferments, Dee would have been much less useful as a free-lance spy, and there is evidence at this time that Leicester as well as the Queen was anxious for him to gain information on the continent as to the general feeling there about England. It is generally conceded that he was from the very beginning of the Elizabethan era employed as a spy and that the phrase "Intelligencer" used by Lilly was intended in this sense. Sometimes such work was undertaken directly for the Queen, more often through Leicester and Cecil. Rewards for such work would have been kept secret. What is significant is that Dee himself never complained of meanness on the Queen's part, though occasionally he expressed disappointment at being passed over for preferment and at meagre payments by the State for his services.

Sometimes Dee was away for months at a time between 1557 and 1562 and for long periods there is no record of what he was

doing, except for his books and pamphlets. One thing is certain: he made voyages to distant lands, probably accompanying some of the sea captains as assistant navigator. There is the curious story that he visited St. Helena, based largely on certain speculation about references in his narratives. But there is no substantiation for this claim, which is solemnly made in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and it is either not mentioned, or repudiated by most people who have written about Dee. It is highly improbable that he made any such voyage, or it would have warranted at least a mention in one of the large number of books written about this British colony.⁴

St. Helena was discovered by the Portuguese Admiral, Joao da Nova Castella, in 1502 and it was not until 1582 that Edward Fenton, sailor, pirate, explorer and adventurer, arrived off the island in command of four ships. It was Fenton's plan to seize St. Helena, "to possess the same and there to be proclaimed Kyng." But he appears to have been overruled in his ambitious plans by his colleagues.

It was not until 1588 that Captain Thomas Cavendish became the first Englishman positively known to have reached St. Helena. He had discovered the whereabouts of this small and isolated South Atlantic island, which the Portuguese had kept secret for eighty-six years, from the pilot of a Spanish vessel he had captured.

The origin of the story about Dee having visited St. Helena probably came from one of his own Intelligence reports. He had discovered that English sea captains did not often pay much attention to third-hand, or fourth-hand reports of new lands that had been discovered; they only wanted to listen to somebody who had actually visited them. Some of Dee's reports of newly discovered territories were phrased in such a manner that they might be misconstrued as being eye-witness accounts by Dee himself. No doubt he found this method of description the only means of convincing the doubting mariners.

In all his early Intelligence work Dee concentrated very largely on information about new voyages and the discoveries of new lands and especially of islands which might have strategic value.

He was one of the first to visualise the sea power of England being built up by "... a series of steppes across the oceans, small islandes with good anchorages and bountifullie supplied with freshe water, each of which would in itself be the equivalent of a mightie shippe of war, flying the Queene's flag. By this means we can carry our trade to the furthermoste partes of the earth and harrie all our enemies who venture out on the oceans."⁵

St. Helena was one such place which he coveted long before any English sea captain had heard of the island, let alone contemplated capturing it, for the Portuguese guarded their South Atlantic base as a close secret. To the Portuguese the island was to serve them as a secret weapon, providing a supply of fresh water on expeditions to the Indies and as a kind of half-way staging point in voyages of discovery. The first settler on the island was a Portuguese nobleman who had been maimed and tortured for having gone over to the side of the Indian commander in Goa. Fernando Dom Lopez paid for this when handed back to the Portuguese by the defeated Indians by having his right hand, his ears, nose and left thumb cut off. Lopez could not face returning to his native land in such a condition so he begged to be put ashore on the voyage home. The captain of the ship landed him on St. Helena.

Years later Dom Lopez allowed a ship to take him to Lisbon and from there he paid a visit to the Pope to be absolved of his sins. The Pope offered to grant him any boon he wished: all he asked was to be allowed to return to St. Helena, where he died in 1545.

Dee, to judge from fragmentary comments in his writings, heard this story when he visited Rome, and he seems to have determined there and then to find out more about the island and to make a report on it. This he achieved with his customary diligence, noting that the island had "an abundance of fresh water", that it was thickly covered by trees and abounded with seals and turtles.

When Dee gleaned this intelligence, mainly, one must assume, from Portuguese or Spanish travellers, or some Jesuit priests

who had visited St. Helena, the island was without any permanent inhabitants and it must have been a temptation to urge its capture by the English. Perhaps Edward Fenton was inspired by Dee's reports. But again, as in so many things, Dee was ahead of his times, for it was not for another hundred years that the English took over the colony.



John Dee in middle age



Gerardus Mercator, Dee's tutor at the University of Louvain

THE MYSTERY OF THE *MONAD*

DEE'S TRAVELS had considerably interrupted his writing and though he seems to have written at intervals during this period, much of his work was not published, sometimes because it became out-of-date through other writers having forestalled him on the continent, more often because of the very high cost of printing. But in 1561 he brought out a text-book on arithmetic written in the form of a dialogue between master and pupil. For the first time the symbols of plus, minus and equals were introduced.

But in 1562 he went to the Low Countries again, this time on the instructions of Cecil, but ostensibly to meet continental mathematicians. His interest was, however, diverted by his discovery of a book, *Stenographia* by Trithemius, Abbot of Spanheim (1462-1516), a protégé of the Emperor Maximilian.

Dee was sufficiently excited at this discovery to mention it in a letter to Sir William Cecil, indicating that he was copying out Trithemius' work. This correspondence with Cecil is of the utmost importance in assessing the nature of Dee's mission at this time. It is curious that though Dee was sent abroad so frequently either at the express wish of the Queen herself, or her Ministers, his name rarely appears in published State Papers. This is some measure of the secrecy which surrounded his missions and the highly confidential nature of his work. Dee told Cecil that he had come across Trithemius' works through his acquaintance with Christopher Plantin, a famous craftsman in topography and a bookseller in Antwerp. On 16 February, 1563,

he asked Cecil whether he was to return to England (as he evidently wished to do), or to remain in the Low Countries. He added that he had purchased "one boke which would be of vaste use to a Statesman in your Position" and he begged to be allowed the leisure for research of which "my countrie and the republic of letter shud reape fruite."

The book he had purchased, he said, had been sought by others who had offered "a Thousand Crownes and yet could not be obteyned... a boke for which many a lerned man has long sought and dayly doth seeke; *whose use is greater than the fame thereof is spread*. The title is on this wise 'Stegangraphia Joannes Tritemij.'"¹

The italics are the author's and not Dee's. For in this hint that the book could be useful to a statesman such as Cecil and that this use was "greater than the fame thereof" is a clue to Dee's true purpose. For in both Trithemius' *Stenographia* and his *Polygraphia* were cunningly contrived studies on the art of cipher writing, perhaps the most significant work of this kind ever written. This was one reason why it had been so long kept away from the public and its secrets so closely guarded.

That Dee's discovery was fully appreciated by Cecil is evident from a certificate of the Elizabethan statesman, dated 28 May, 1563, in which he testified that Dee's time beyond seas had been of inestimable value and "well bestowed."²

Nevertheless, the true implications of much of Trithemius' work had been lost amidst the welter of allegations that *Stenographia* was a manual of demonic magic. Critics had been so incensed at what they believed was an heretical book that they had neglected to interpret it properly, and those who realised that it was a cryptographic treatise were well satisfied that others should merely regard it as heresy. Trithemius himself, in his preface to the work, denied that his book dealt with demonic magic and claimed that it was perfectly compatible with Christian beliefs, saying that the "invocations" were only a disguise to keep its secrets from the average reader.

It is true that Trithemius did compile a catalogue of magical works, but his philosophy was celestial rather than necromantic.

His thesis was that study generated knowledge, that knowledge created love, love produced likeness, likeness communion, while communion created virtue which provided dignity, and with dignity went power which performed the miracle: this was "the unique path to the goal of magic perfection, divine as well as natural, from which all superstitions and diabolical wizardry were totally separated and confounded."

All of which was innocent-sounding enough. How, then, did the *Stenographia* come to acquire its sinister reputation? This was almost entirely because it contained the names of various angels and spirits and the invocations to be used in conjuring them up. Later students of Trithemius, long after Dee's death, confirmed Dee's own view that the first two books of the *Stenographia* dealt with cryptography and that the angels and spirits in them could be satisfactorily explained as descriptions of the forms of cipher-making. Dee was emphatic that the book dealt primarily with ciphers and other methods of transmitting secret messages, an opinion upheld in a seventeenth century defence of Trithemius by the German cryptographer, W. E. Heidel.

In the present day D. P. Walker, one of the greatest modern authorities on natural magic, has written: "I believe that Trithemius' *Stenographia* is partly a treatise on cryptography in which the methods of encipherment are disguised as demonic magic, and partly a treatise on demonic magic. It is highly improbable if Trithemius had merely wished to prevent a treatise on ciphers being too widely understood, that he would, being anyway suspected of black magic, have chosen such a dangerous disguise. On the other hand, if he wished to describe operations involving planetary angels, the cryptographic part of his book providing him with a convincing alibi. . . there is nothing necessarily unorthodox in addressing prayers to angels, planetary or otherwise—for this the authority of Thomas Aquinas could be invoked, nor in hoping that they might do something to help you; it is merely perilous, because, as we shall see, it is difficult to distinguish good angels from deceiving demons. It should also be noted that Trithemius' astrological magic is not only a kind of telepathy; it is also the means of acquiring universal

knowledge . . . We are back again at Peter of Abano's prayer to Jupiter, which so greatly accelerated his scientific progress."³

Later scholars detected the true purpose of Dee's interest in Trithemius, but neglected one important point. Dr. Robert Hooke's opinion was that Dee's methods were based on Trithemius and that he used them to develop a secret system of communication with Ministers at Court and possibly even the Queen herself. Hooke, who was no mean cryptographer himself, was a diligent student of Dee's work. He recorded in his diary of 28 April, 1677: "Saw Dee's...and many other books and mss. about chymistry, conjurations, magick and made me exceeding welcome." Later he wrote that in Elizabeth's reign "the key or method of that book [*Stenographia*] were not so well and commonly known, yet I do not doubt but this inquisitive man had got knowledge of it in his travels and inquiries in Germany."⁴

The important point which later scholars neglected was that Dee's purpose was two-fold: first, to develop the art of cryptography in his work as a spy, and, secondly, to delve deeply into the original theories of telepathy which Trithemius seemed to be developing in his works. In part, of course, the two subjects were linked. As an Intelligence agent Dee would be as interested in telepathy as he was in cryptography, his being the type of mind which could imagine how the former could be utilised in the world of espionage. But, fanciful as telepathy as an aid to espionage may have seemed then, or even today, it was a subject which equally appealed to his scholarly and religious approach to the acquiring of universal knowledge.

Astrology has always been regarded as a means towards acquiring universal knowledge, but no man had translated this into a kind of telepathy before. It is in the third book of Trithemius that the theme of telepathy is developed. The image of the angel is described and he took some pains to explain that it should be recognisable as a human figure. There is a short invocation ending "*In Nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sanctis Amen.*" The instruction then is that the image of the angel is to be wrapped up together with an image of the recipient and buried under a threshold. The message would then be conveyed to the

desired recipient within twenty-four hours, without the use of words, writing or messenger. In blithely optimistic fashion Trithemius opined that by this very same means one might learn anything one wished to know about the recipient of the message and all that was happening in the world.

Trithemius was not alone in venturing such opinions, only he developed them much further than any other of his contemporaries or predecessors. The idea that telepathic communication could be achieved was not a new one. Nor, even in the past, had this been a fanciful exercise in the magical arts. Agrippa specifically denied that such communication was carried out through a medium or any other spirit, though he seemed to imply that the operation might require the help of a "planetary spirit." In this connection he made an interesting reference to Trithemius. Speaking of the possibility of a man conveying his thoughts telepathically to someone else in a very short time, however far apart they might be, he wrote: "And I know how to do this and have often done it. Abbot Trithemius also knew how to do it and used to do it."⁵

Robert Hooke, following a review he wrote in 1692 on Dee's *Libri Mysteriorum*, developed the theory of telepathy further in a discourse to the Royal Society, "shewing a way how to communicate one's mind at great distances." This was later printed in his *Philosophical Experiments and Observations*.

But, without doubt, Dee's main and immediate purpose was to follow up Trithemius' cryptographical theories. These fitted in exactly with his *Monas Hieroglyphica*, which he had been preparing for seven years and which he actually wrote in twelve days. Unquestionably his discovery of *Stenographia* speeded up his completion of the task. His latest work was printed in Antwerp in 1564 and dedicated to the Emperor Maximilian.

It was quite different from any book he had previously written and was exceedingly difficult to understand. Originally he probably intended it to be complementary to the *Aphorisms*, but it dealt with the relation of numbers to natural magic and used a code and symbols which could only be understood by Dee himself and those he had initiated into the secrets of translation.

Intermingled with the code were many false figures deliberately intended to confuse those who did not know the code.⁶ There were twenty-four theorems concerning the signs of the planets, their movements and positions, and deductions which could only be determined arithmetically by the symbols of those planets. The magical and the metaphysical are only hinted at in this work. Dee's main theme was to reveal the meditations of Trithemius and to stress that the time-honoured Hermetic Teaching and art show that Nature conceals more than she reveals to the vulgar eye of mortal man. A second edition, produced in 1591, was entitled *The Monad, Hieroglyphically, Mathematically, Magically, Cabbalistically and Anagogically Explained.*"

The book became famous in Europe, but was not popular with the universities. Who could blame them, for who could understand it? There have been many attempts to explain it, but none has really succeeded. In 1947 J. W. Hamilton-Jones published *The Hieroglyphic Monad*, a conscientious attempt to translate the work in modern language, but one is still left with a confused picture. All who attempt to translate Dee's more complex works seem to get bogged down in the very jargon by which he sets out to confuse. Thus Mr. Hamilton-Jones's view is that "Dee's theories seem to be we can only conceive of non-existent things through abstract thought and we must agree on the terminology before we begin." Precisely, but what are we to make of this terminology?

Dr. Thomas Smith tells us in his *Life of John Dee* (1707) that "whatsoever was afterwards objected to in it [*The Monad*] by the most learned men of both universities, he was accustomed to silence by this one answer, that they had so found fault with and censured that book because they did not altogether understand it." In the frontispiece of the book one reads this comment by Dee:

"Who does not understand, should either learn or be silent."

But if the scholars did not understand it, those at Court seem to have found some practical value in the work. True, they did not seek to explain it, but both Cecil and the Queen gave the impression that they understood the underlying aims. Cecil

declared it to be "of the utmost value for the securities of the Realme" and what could this statement mean if it did not refer to the field of Intelligence and espionage? Dee himself in his *Compendium Rehearsal* of 4 June, 1564, declared that "when *Monas Hieroglyphica* appeared, Queen Elizabeth herself did vouchsafe to read that booke *obiter* with me at Grenewich and she made the remark that:

"Whereas I had prefixed in the forefront of the book *Qui non intelligit, aut taceat, aut discat*: if I would desclose unto her the secrets of that book she would, *et discere et facere*; whereupon her Majestie had a little perusion of the same with me, and then in most heroical and princely wise did comfort and encourage me in my studies philosophical and mathematicall."

It seems apparent that Elizabeth, and presumably Cecil, understood that Dee was employing ciphers to give certain information. In the *Monad* this was not the information of a spy, but of a scientist, but there was the underlying implication that secret intelligence could also be communicated by this means. A typical example of his technique was to use alchemical symbols for conveying scientific reality. In the *Monad* he applied his symbols superficially to the co-ordination which takes places in the egg, but the implication is clear: that alchemists are imposters and that when he refers by alchemical symbols to the shell of an egg, its yolk and the white he does not mean these substances but salt, sulphur and mercury respectively. Similarly when he writes of a scarab he refers to earth, dung equals heat or fire, Jupiter means air and the eagle's egg is secondary water. The only clue is when he speaks of these symbols as "these supreme mysteries of nature."

Similarly when Dee refers to certain artificial stones these are meant to symbolise colours which made their appearance when his scientific experiments were conducted.

It is doubtful whether at this distance from the Elizabethan age all his cryptographical forms can be satisfactorily translated, as the forms seem to vary according to the subjects with which he is dealing. The astronomical and scientific cryptograms are the easiest to interpret, the forms he employed when conveying

intelligence were naturally enough more complex. "Mercury" had a variety of meanings, according to the context of his theme. Sometimes this was purely scientific as when he sought to show that "it is by the white of an egg that the impurities are purged away from the matter in which the unalterable body is to be found." But at other times the "white of an egg", or Mercury signified "goodness", the "Christian religion" and "intellect", "law" and "reason." Aries signified not only the Jews and the Holy Land, but also England and the English and "fire" and "wisdom."

Other symbols that Dee used were:

⋈ = an orgasm (the Pisces) sign associated with Venus and Cupid);

♀ = Venus or Copper;

aa = all together;

☾ = Moon or silver;

L.V. = Lignum vitae;

◦◦ = oil;

θ = salt;

☉ = sun or gold;

♊ = frog or Frenchman;

Ø = Spain;

Jupiter = Cecil;

○-{} = Mars, danger, a threat to the Crown.

It was on his return to England after the publication of the *Monas Hieroglyphica* that Queen Elizabeth agreed to become a pupil of Dee and that he on his part "disclosed some of my secretes to her...and the true purpose of my boke." Now the Queen, having read Isocrates, Sophocles and Demosthenes in Greek and Cicero and Livy in Latin, as well as speaking French, Italian and some Spanish, was certainly qualified to make the attempt to understand the complexities of Dee's work. She had a taste for metaphors and symbols and for the *double entendre* comprehensible to the few and had always been fascinated by the cryptic, if not the cryptographic phrase. In short, she adored talking in riddles if she found somebody who could share her passion.

Even at this period of her reign her tutor Ascham was still reading Greek and Latin with her every day; indeed, Ascham declared that she read more Greek in a day than some of the clergy did Latin in a whole week. But it is unlikely that Elizabeth would succeed, even with Dee's help, where many students and scholars of a later age have failed to understand the *Monad*. Perhaps the clue to what she understood lies in a remark she made to Dee and which he carefully recorded: "Verilie, deare Doctor, you have contrived a moste economicall and ingeniouslie cunninge communication for your secretes."

Thus it would appear that the "true purpose of my boke" as far as the Queen was concerned was not Dee's celestial philosophy, but his hidden cryptography. Did Elizabeth see just how useful this might be if employed in affairs of State?

It was unfortunate for Dee's reputation with posterity that the curious cabbalistic treatise on the elements contained in his work was later to be used as a basis for a revival of magic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What is of greater import is the question of whether, as has been alleged, it formed a basis for Rosicrucianism. The tradition that Dee founded this Brotherhood is spurious and nothing in the *Monad* can be said to support it. The only doubtful evidence of this seems to lie in one of the seventy-nine books said to have been written by Dee—*A Treatise of the Rose-Crucian Secretes*. It is extremely unlikely that this was a genuine work of Dee's, for the Rosicrucians only came into existence about the time of his death, or just afterwards.

In fact the treatise just mentioned is almost certainly a fake: it was very easy to fake works of Dee, for he had at least four different kinds of handwriting, all of which he employed in turn, mainly to hide the identity of the writer. *Rosie-Crucian* is almost certainly a bastardised and anglicised version of the *Rosenkreuzes*, mythical followers of the equally mythical Christian Rosencreutz who is supposed to have lived in the fifteenth century.

But the tradition that Dee founded the Rosicrucians is frequently put forward even in modern times. And, though this is untrue, there are unquestionable links between Dee and this

movement. The Rosicrucian Order of today claims that he was "associated with the Order" and lists his Diaries as "works of reference on the movement." But it is only fair to state that it also cites as books of reference the works of Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, Raymond Lully, Arnold de Villanova and Paracelsus, all of whom date back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Lully is said to have written more than four hundred "Rosicrucian treatises." So there is no question of Dee having founded the movement, though his works have certainly influenced it.

In Germany in the seventeenth century it was generally accepted that Dee was a secret agent of the English Government and that he carried out his work by means of magical communication. Through the ages the legend grew into something larger until it was distorted into the story that Dee founded the Rosicrucians as a subsidiary of the British Secret Service and that through his planning it carried on into modern times as a permanent unit of that Service. Professor Trevor-Roper's book, *The Last Days of Hitler*, tells how the humourless, but nevertheless efficient Himmler laid down quite categorically that the Rosicrucians were a branch of British espionage!

The truth is that nobody can be quite sure how the Rosicrucian Brotherhood originated. Today they claim that the traditions of the movement have been handed down by word of mouth from the mystery schools which existed in the eighteenth dynasty or the reign of Pharaoh Akhnaton, about 1350 B.C., and that the original Rosicrucians met in the secret chambers of the Great Pyramids. One theory is that this society was formed by Christian Rosencreutz about the year 1459, while yet another had it that the Rosicrucians were started by a Dutchman, born in 1378, who had translated a mysterious Arabic book, called *M*, and formed a society of eight members who swore to be celibates and to keep their secrets for a hundred years.

Both theories appear to have little foundation in fact. The Rosicrucians seem first to have been established during the religious wars in Cassel in Germany when Protestant sects were organising their forces against Catholicism sometime between

1600 and 1620. In 1614 an anonymous tract, attributed to the Brotherhood, was published under the title of *Fama Fraternitas des loblichen Ordens des Rosenkreuzes*. How far this movement owed its origin to an ancient myth, as its name would suggest, how far it was genuinely occult, or to what extent it was a political entity is largely speculation. But it was certainly a form of secret society with rather obscure political aims and a creed that was said to be devoted to healing the sick by mystical processes and relieving the poor by means of the manufacture of gold through the "Philosopher's Stone". Magical and hypnotic powers were claimed by its members, or at least by its hierarchy, and they were at that time said to be seeking the secret of, if not eternal life, at least longevity. In the seventeenth century there was a tendency for the remaining Hermetists and other occultists to go underground and meet in secret. The manifestos explicitly concerned with the movement were couched in mysterious and cabalistic language which gave little away.

Myth, hoax or reality? Each verdict has been given in turn on the early Rosicrucians. P. Arnold in *Histoire des Rose-Croix et Les Origines de la Franc-Maçonnerie* dispelled some of the fanciful stories that have gathered around the Rosicrucian legend and expressed the belief that the fraternity had no real existence. Others have put forward the opinion that the whole affair was a hoax and that Johann Valentine Andreae, a pious Stuttgart preacher, had written some of the Rosicrucian pamphlets to ridicule the current love of secrecy and cult for mysterious societies. Yet the fact remains that in 1694 the Rosicrucians, under the leadership of Johannes Kelpius, head of one of their lodges in Europe, set out for America, inspired, it is said, by a book written by Francis Bacon. They built a colony at Ephrata, Pennsylvania and erected the first astronomical laboratory in the Western World. In the United States today the movement is remarkably strong.

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Rosicrucians were feared and disliked because they were suspected of reactionary tendencies. The Count of Cagliostro claimed to be an exponent of Rosicrucianism and to have the recipe of the

Elixir of Life. Charlatan that he was, Cagliostro nevertheless effected some remarkable cures of people declared by orthodox doctors to be incurable. But hypnotism and a gift for psychotherapy were probably the roots of Cagliostro's talent, not Rosicrucianism.

Perhaps on the continent the reputed links between Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry added to the belief that the Brotherhood had political and subversive aims. Both Ashmole and de Quincey touched on the Rosicrucian links with Freemasonry, the latter writing a tract on the subject. In the eighteenth century there was an attempt by Freemasons holding high office to organise themselves into a Rosicrucian inner circle and in 1781 King Friederich Wilhelm II of Prussia joined a Lutheran Rosicrucian society. But fundamentally the Brotherhood was more occult-minded than political, and the secrecy with which they surrounded themselves was the secrecy of eccentrics wishing to preserve the ancient occult teachings and to create out of them a religious philosophy which included a form of theosophy and the theories of reincarnation. Novelists in the nineteenth century took up the theme of Rosicrucianism; it was one which lent itself to the post-Gothic-mystery school of writers. Shelley, using a pseudonym, wrote *St. Irvine or the Rosicrucian* (1811), Bulwer Lytton dealt with the same subject in *Zanoni* (1853), and Harrison Ainsworth, perhaps the most imaginative gilder of the legend in the realm of fiction made Rosicrucianism the theme of his novel, *Auriol*.

Ainsworth gave some credence to the old canard about Dee founding the movement by portraying him as the aged alchemist in this novel: "The sixteenth century drew to a close.... The old man's beard and hair was white as snow—the former descending to his girdle.... Known by the name of Doctor Lamb, and addicted to alchemical and philosophical pursuits, this venerable personage was esteemed by the vulgar as little better than a wizard." It was a readily identifiable picture of Dee in his old age and is borne out by his portraits.

So through the ages both Rosicrucianism and Dee became distorted by misrepresentation and fiction, by individualists wish-

ing to utilise the mask of a secret society for their own aims, by plagiarists too lazy to do other than borrow other people's ideas. But there is no doubt at all that the latter-day Rosicrucians have adopted and adapted some of the mystical invocations of Dee. The one Rosicrucian Order which provides the most positive proof of this was *The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*, a British order which was linked with the Rosicrucians of Nuremberg.

Even Aleister Crowley borrowed heavily from Rosicrucianism, incorporating his own brand of demonic magic with Hindu erotic mysticism—*chakras*—and a mixture of the “sexual magic” of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* and Rosicrucian ritual. Crowley had in his early days belonged to *The Golden Dawn*.

John Dee was fully conscious of the dishonesty, hypocrisy and charlatanism of the bogus alchemists and seers of his own time and in the *Monad* took the alchemists to task, dubbing them “imposters” and showing up their knavery. By implication, he showed that when many alchemists talked about mixing the ingredients of witchcraft—the shell of an egg, the yolk, a scarab, dung and an Eagle's egg, their rites and chatter were meaningless and false. His assumption was that they did not know what they were talking about and had no comprehension that these names were symbols for salt, sulphur, earth, heat and secondary water respectively. Thus, he argued, had medieval imposters distorted the learning of the ancients by their supreme ignorance.

Later writers employed the symbols used by Dee in the *Monad* in their own more utilitarian alchemical works, but they got the credit and not Dee. Foremost among these was Robert Hooke, whose *Micrographia* was a classic in scientific literature in the seventeenth century. Having already followed in Dee's footsteps in examining telepathy, he borrowed many of his predecessors' symbols and adapted them as codes in his diaries. Other less reputable men employed Dee's symbols for black magic rites for which, most unfairly, Dee got the blame.

Yet there are certain parallels between the underlying aims and principles of Rosicrucianism and the ideas set out by Dee in the *Monad*. Theosophy and the principle of reincarnation form

the modern elements of Rosicrucianism, but both the Rosicrucians and Dee drew their inspiration from ancient Egypt. The present day teaching of Rosicrucianism, in as far as it can be explained for the uninitiated, is that man can experience "momentary flights of the soul... become one with the universe and receive an influx of great understanding." The ancients called this "cosmic consciousness"—the merging of man's mind with the Universal Intelligence. To this extent Dee thought on Rosicrucian lines when he expounded a similar doctrine in the *Monad*.

A SECRET MISSION FOR THE QUEEN

IN 1564 DEE went to live in Mortlake once again. It was, stated Ashmole, in a house "neere the water side, a little westward from the Church . . . The buildings which Sir Fr. Crane erected for working of tapestry hangings, and are still (1673) employed to that use, were built upon the ground whereon Dr. Dee's laboratory and other roomes for that use stood. Upon the west is a square court and the next is the house wherein Dr. Dee dwelt, now inhabited by one Mr. Shelbury, and further west his garden. . . . Dr. Dee was well beloved and respected of all persons of quality thereabouts, who very often invited him to their houses, or came to his."

This is the most authentic contemporary account we have of Dee's home. It is not absolutely certain that he bought the house, though reports state that he did. If so, it was unquestionably put legally in his mother's name. In 1564 she was the nominal owner and merely ceded some rooms to her son, reserving the others for herself. Additional tenements nearby were acquired to house his library and scientific instruments and laboratories, which were growing all the time. Unfortunately the first Mortlake Register, from 1538 to 1599, is missing so there are no records of the Dee family available in these. The actual site of the house was in what is today Mortlake High Street. As Ashmole indicated the premises later became the Royal Tapestry Works and after Dee's death the property was transferred to the Manor of Mortlake.

The three laboratories which Dee built at his home aroused

much curiosity locally, but they were not kept nearly as secret as was generally assumed. Many visitors from Court were shown round them and Dee's circle at this time included many men who were playing their part in the development of scientific thought in England. With these men Dee succeeded in building up an elite scientific circle, a group of friends and pupils who in effect formed the nucleus of a Royal Scientific Society.

Among this brilliant circle were such diverse characters as Dr. Thomas Allen, that same able mathematician and ally of Robert Dudley who had been accused of witchcraft, Thomas Marriott, Walter Warner, Tarporley, Sir Philip Sidney, most attractive of all Dee's pupils, Adrian Gilbert and Martin Frobisher.

Dee's home was conveniently situated to the Court, all the Queen's residences at Hampton Court and Richmond Palace being close at hand. Sidney's mother was the daughter of his old patron, Northumberland, which accounted for the bond of friendship between them. It is typical of Dee's industry that he drew up a sixty-two page horoscope for Sidney.

About this time Dee was asked to escort the Marchioness of Northampton from Antwerp to Greenwich and she, out of gratitude for his assistance, asked that he be given the Deanery of Gloucester. But again other counsels prevailed and the offer was not confirmed.

Most portraits of Dee during this period suggest an ambitious man, always short of money, given little or nothing for his researches and fighting a lone battle for recognition. Hort wrote that "Elizabeth's astrologer still enjoyed the royal favour. She was gracious and friendly in all her dealings with him and made him occasional gifts of money. But his researches, in which he now needed paid assistance, were greatly hindered by lack of funds."¹

Others tell much the same story. But this is not an accurate picture and is neither fair to Dee, nor his patrons. There is constant evidence of gifts from Elizabeth to her astrologer and no doubt there were transactions in connection with his many missions overseas on her behalf which were kept secret, as indeed the missions themselves required. The fact is that Dee lived



Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Dee's patron at the court of Elizabeth I



Sir Francis Walsingham: "A most subtle searcher of secrets," declared Camden, "nothing being contrived anywhere that he knew not by intelligence"

above his income, due not to personal extravagances but to his insatiable quest for knowledge. To have maintained an establishment as large as that at Mortlake he must have had ample funds and somebody must have financed his extensive journeys abroad. As to the question of his being passed over for preferment, this may have been true in his latter years, but, as we have already seen, in the early part of Elizabeth's reign he himself rejected a number of offers, knowing that to be tied to a fixed post would preclude him from undertaking intelligence work.

Of course he never had enough money because he had no private income of his own and because the maintenance and development of his vast library alone must have cost him a fortune. If this library had remained extant it would have rivalled that of Bodley: it represented at one time a sum of money which would have been a fortune in Tudor days.

The truth is that the Intelligence game was in its early stages and payment then, as now, was strictly by results. And in the early days of espionage there was no thought of providing vast funds for obtaining intelligence. In many respects Dee's financial plight was not commensurately as serious as that of Walsingham, founder of the Secret Service as we know it today. Walsingham had constant financial trouble in maintaining his Intelligence network and in the end bankrupted himself by investing his own money when he could obtain no more from the Crown. Camden declared that Walsingham weakened his estate by his large expenditure for secret service and died "surcharged with debt". This is supported by Walsingham's own statement in his will a year before his death that "I will that my body in hope of a joyful resurrection be buried without any such extraordinary ceremonies as usually appertain to a man serving in my place, in respect of the greatness of my debts and the mean state I shall leave my wife and heirs in."²

But at this time it was not with Walsingham that Dee was concerned, but with William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who was much more occupied with Intelligence at home and combating the Queen's enemies over the border in Scotland than with developing espionage overseas. Not the least of Cecil's problems was

that of whether the Queen should marry. It was not merely a case of finding a suitable suitor, but of whether the Queen herself was prepared to undertake matrimony. She herself had decided not merely to keep her various foreign suitors guessing, but to leave her own advisers in doubt. At one moment Cecil thought she had decided on celibacy, as indeed Dee had himself indicated in his horoscope, at another he believed she was prepared to make an alliance if it benefited her country. When the Archduke Charles of Austria was in the running for consort and he sent an envoy to the Queen, Elizabeth had commented: "If I am to disclose to you what I should prefer if I follow the inclination of my nature, it is this: Beggarwoman and single, far rather than Queen and married."

Cecil had other problems, too. Robert Dudley, now Earl of Leicester, was openly critical of what he regarded as Cecil's attempts at appeasement both abroad and at home. Leicester represented the younger and more radical of the politicians who wanted to snuff out all pro-Spanish and Catholic plots the moment they were discovered and to show a more aggressive spirit. Trade and political relations with France were not much better than they were with Spain, the always disturbing problem of Mary, Queen of Scots remained a festering sore in the body politic. Leicester had risked incurring the Queen's annoyance by telling her that affairs of State were being so mismanaged that either the State must suffer, or Cecil must be ousted. The Queen, still mindful of Cecil's great services over the years, angrily berated her favourite courtier for his opinions.

Elizabeth showed all her life consistency in one aim—to unify her people and this meant to some extent imbuing her advisers and her statesmen with a spirit of tolerance towards one another. This policy alone prevented a disastrous break between the followers of Cecil and those of Leicester and, as her biographer, Sir John Neale put it, "she was apt to rejoice more over one Catholic who was loyal than over ninety hot-gospellers whose loyalty needed no demonstration... No doubt her kingdom was to be Protestant, and in times of danger Cecil and her keener

councillors were allowed to harry disobedient Catholics. But she wanted no inquisitorial practices."³

Cecil was, of course, in his own way as militant a Protestant as any, but he was anxious to do nothing precipitate to leave England with not a single continental ally: in short, England must not be drawn into a war without allies. Leicester, the gay cavalier of politics, who so incongruously allied himself with the Puritans solely for political ends and became their hero, was all for helping Protestant rebels wherever they were to be found, sometimes, it would seem, regardless of the consequences.

Elizabeth was content to leave everyone guessing, but, so that this policy should not be construed as weakness, to show her firmness occasionally by remonstrating with the Spanish Ambassador one moment and condemning the Dutch pirates for interfering with English trade the next. But the Queen had a keen sixth sense where intrigue was concerned; she would instinctively smell out a plotter long before Cecil. This may have been a woman's intuition, but it may also have resulted from some of Dee's personal reports to her. She also knew that she risked worse perils if she gave way to the extremist policies of the Puritans. Dee's own views were that the balance of power was so delicate that problems needed to be approached obliquely—here his "crab-like" nature showed itself—so that neither side could claim him completely as their own, nor say that he was against them. He was much more cautious than Leicester, though extremely attentive to Leicester's opinions; at the same time he was more suspicious of people's motives than was Cecil. For example, Dee warned the Queen that the Duke of Norfolk was disloyal and a danger to the State. At that time Cecil was convinced of Norfolk's loyalty and disposed to be lenient towards him, despite all reports that he was involving himself in the Catholic insurrectionary movement. Dee, still the eager intelligencer, sniffing out methods of intrigue, informed the Queen that Norfolk had set up a network of agents who passed messages to one another in bottles of wine.

The Queen was furious and at the same time loth to believe Dee's story. It was not that she did not have her doubts as to

Norfolk's intentions, but she still wished to avoid a rift. Was the project of marriage between Norfolk and Mary, Queen of Scots, serious? Was this Norfolk's own idea, or was it something being foisted on him by others. To be fair, she sent for Norfolk and gave him a chance to explain things himself. Cecil advised Norfolk to speak freely to the Queen, but he was silent and evasive. She then warned him to have no further dealings in the plan.

Inevitably Norfolk made all the wrong moves. At this stage he could have withdrawn from the proposed marriage to Mary, with some loss of face, but at least with the prospect of a last chance with his Sovereign. He left the Court and declined to return, trying to send a message to the Duke of Alva and getting in touch with some of the Catholic rebels. Inevitably he was sent to the Tower and the short-lived North Rebellion which followed was put down. Curiously, it was not until Norfolk was safely in the Tower that his secret mode of communication of messages in bottles of wine was revealed. Thus was Dee's warning proved to be correct. It was rewarded shortly afterwards by the gift from the Queen of some valuable books to his now rapidly growing library.

Dee found great difficulty in publishing learned works in England, which undoubtedly explains the large amount of unpublished material he left to posterity. Some of his works printed on the Continent are now missing. In 1569 he visited Urbino where a new university had been established only five years earlier, and in the same year he was in Rome, ostensibly preparing material for his work on Euclid. This came to fruition in 1570 when he wrote the preface to the first English edition of Euclid, translated by Henry Billingsley. Apart from writing a masterly introduction to the subject, Dee contributed the diagrams and helped Billingsley as an adviser on the technical side. He outlined the state of mathematical sciences in his time and urged that they should be vigorously prosecuted and improved in England. Touching on the question of the refraction of light, he urged that telescopes would be of immense value to the Army, describing how a captain of foot soldiers or of cavalry

should use "an astronomical staffe commodiously framed for carriage and use, and may wonderfully help himself by perspective glasses; in which, I trust, our posterity will prove more skilfull and expert and to greater purpose than in these days can almost be credited possible."

Ironically, in his preface, he referred to the popular belief that he was a conjuror and sadly lamented the reproach and suspicion under which he worked. Should an inquiring Christian philosopher and honest student be condemned "as a companion of hellhounds and a caller and a conjuror of wicked damned spirits"?

"Actes and feates, naturally, mathematically and mechanically wrought" were not done by demonic magic, he argued. In a singularly bitter diatribe which spoke eloquently of the violent prejudice against Dee still to be found in his own country, he went on: "O, my unkinde countrymen. O unnatural countrymen. O brainsicke, rashe, spitefull and disdainfull countrymen. Why oppresse you me this violently with your slandering of me, contrary to vertue and contrary to your own conscience...."

"Have I so long, so dearly, so farre, so carefully, so painfully, so dangerously fought and travelled for the learning of wisdom and atteyning of vertue, and in the end an I become worse than when I began? Worse than a madman, a dangerous member in the Commonwealth and no member of the Church of Christ?"

Sinister interpretations were put on Dee's mathematical works and experiments no less than his other activities. In a sly reference to that mechanical beetle he had invented and used in the stage production at Cambridge, he listed "the mechanical fly made at Nuremberg" which showed he was drawing on a list of mechanical marvels similar to those described by Agrippa and Campanella. As to the urgency of his plea for mathematics to be developed and improved, he based the importance of this on "the noble Earl of Mirandual" who set up nine hundred theses in Rome, among them being, "in his eleventh mathematical conclusion, the statement that 'by numbers a way is had, to the searching out, and understanding of everie thyng, hable to be known'."

How different from his bitterness towards the mass of his

critics was his recorded opinion of his Queen. "In her princely countenance," he wrote, "I never perceived frown towards me or discontented regard or view on me, but at all times favorable and gracious to the joy and comfort of my true, faithfull and loyall heart."

Dee followed up his preface to Billingsley's work by urging the creation of a Scientific Academy, but progress towards this aim seems never to have gone beyond informal talks. However, he made his own circle of friends and students at Mortlake into something very like an academy and even more like a navigational college. It was here, in the long, rambling house by the Thames, that many important navigational techniques were planned and discussed. Here much work was done in developing Dee's Paradoxicall Compass, invented much earlier. Dee had been interested in the aim of establishing a North-west Passage years before this became part of Elizabethan policy, and his compass was specially designed for use in Polar waters, aimed at more accurate calculation of variation of the compass.

The lessons of the Norfolk affair and the Northern Rebellion were plain to Queen and Court. England needed a Continental ally and what better means of obtaining one than through the marriage of the Queen. So in the autumn of 1570 this subject was once again mooted and courtiers began to look in the direction of France. The two nations would make natural, if somewhat uneasy, allies against Spain and, this apart, this was a supremely opportune moment to bring the two countries together. The party of Charles of Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine, which had always been implacably opposed to Elizabeth and violently antagonistic to the Huguenots, was out of power. In favour were the *Politiques*, the moderate Catholics who preferred a policy of religious unity linked with a national front against Spain.

So the new proposal was for marriage between Elizabeth and the Duke of Anjou. Historians have suggested that the Queen was now quite sincere in her resolve to marry, but this is exceedingly doubtful. It is more than probable that she was anxious to go along with the politicians so far and no further. In any event the negotiations for the alliance with Anjou petered out through

the religious obstinacy of the Duke. The Queen knew that if Anjou retained his religion, this would be an almost insurmountable obstacle to their marriage.

Burghley, more anxious for a French alliance than anyone else at Court, was deeply disappointed, but determined to consider any worthwhile alternative. This was readily provided by Catherine of Medici, Anjou's ambitious mother, who put forward the claims of her younger son, the Duke of Alençon. This youth was more than twenty years younger than Elizabeth and his features were marred by smallpox. "The pock holes are no great disfigurement of his face," wrote the English Ambassador, "because they are rather thick than deep or great... when I saw him at my last audience, he seemed to me to grow daily more handsome."

Perhaps Elizabeth remembered the flattering stories of Anne of Cleves brought to Henry VIII before his marriage to the "Flanders Mare". At any rate she distrusted ambassadorial reports and was equally doubtful about the real intentions of the various parties in France. She wanted independent information and was impatient with the reports sent to her by Lord Buckhurst, who in February, 1571, had been sent to France to conduct negotiations. So that same year she sent John Dee on another secret mission. Exactly what it was we do not know, but it involved a journey to the Duchy of Lorraine and almost certainly concerned the proposed alliance with France and the question of marriage with either Anjou or his brother. Dee was asked to draw horoscopes of both men.

There is some hint that Walsingham had a hand in this mission. He had not yet achieved full political power, but was already influential behind the scenes and he had urged the Queen that there was not the slightest chance of the French compromising on the religious issues and urged Elizabeth not to give way one iota of religious principles herself. Leicester, who was a close friend of Walsingham, was equally against the marriage plans, though jealousy may have played some part here. But the man Walsingham feared, even though he was temporarily

eclipsed, was the Cardinal of Lorraine. It was on the future prospects of this statesman-priest that Dee was asked to inquire.

That Dee's mission must have been important there is little doubt, as, when he was taken seriously ill during his trip to France, the Queen sent two of her own physicians, Anslowe and Balthorpe, to cure him. Dee's comment on this is interesting: "The Queene did feare for my life if I had to attende me foreygn physytians, so she dispatched her verie owne to administer unto me."⁴

Dee thought that the political possibilities of an alliance were more attractive and beneficial than "anythinge so unpropitious as matrimonie for which the starres give no brief and the factes as seene in France the more soe." This was certainly what Walsingham believed and wanted to hear. As for the Queen she must have been hugely delighted when, without matrimonial entanglements, she concluded the Treaty of Blois a year later. This gave her a defensive treaty that could be used against Spain in emergency and ended the long period of dangerous isolation.

From France Dee went on to Antwerp where he made copious notes from the library of Ortelius. By the time he returned to England Walsingham had succeeded Burghley as Secretary of State. He and Burghley, though having their differences, had worked in the closest co-operation for years, each being indispensable to the other, and they continued to do so. But once Walsingham came to power he set out to create out of nothing a widespread system of secret Intelligence and the semblance of a counter-espionage organisation. Perhaps organisation is not quite the word to describe something that was typically English in its empirical and piecemeal approach, but it was more thorough and far-reaching than anything that had been attempted before.

"Intelligence is never too dear" was Walsingham's motto, and indeed it often cost him dearly by what he so patriotically expended on it out of his private means. But, said Camden, "he was a most subtle searcher of secrets, nothing being contrived anywhere that he knew not by Intelligence." Determined to protect and strengthen the Protestant cause, he became the ruthless enemy of Mary, Queen of Scots and spent years gathering infor-

mation which was intended to bring her to her doom and make his own royal mistress secure in her own realm.

In 1572 occurred an event which shook the very foundation of orthodox scientific beliefs regarding the heavens. The star Super Nova appeared in the skies and was reported in Cassiopeia, a star as bright as Venus and which could be seen through cloud at night and in the daytime as well. It remained visible for seventeen months. This prompted Dee to write *Paralacticae Camvantationes Praxoosq: Nucleus Quidam* (1573). The advent of this star baffled and dismayed astronomers who believed in Aristotle and the unchanging heavens. Digges, who published a similar work at the same time, and Dee were both praised by Camden who wrote that these "two famous mathematicians amongst us have learnedly proved by the doctrine of paralloxes that it [the star] was in the celestial and not in the elementary region, and were of opinion that it disappeared little and little by ascending. Tis certain, that after eight months, all men perceived it grew less and less."

The Continent hailed Dee's work on the star as a masterpiece. He wrote two other works on the same subject, but both are now lost. The more thoughtful scholars in England—and they were only a few—regarded Dee's analysis of the star, probably a comet, as a beneficial antidote to the nonsense and superstition which had been talked about it. The star was said to presage the coming of plague and it was noted by the superstitious that an outbreak of this occurred in Europe shortly afterwards.

But the years 1570–74 are the least documented of Dee's life, so much so that even his first marriage is to some extent wrapped in mystery. At about this time he recorded in his diary that he made "a very faithfull and inviolable promise to the Queene." There is some speculation as to what this was, some asserting it concerned his alchemical experiments, but of this there is no proof. Shortly afterwards he asked for and obtained the Queen's permission to marry a young woman of whom we know nothing, not even her name. She died the following year and curiously enough was buried in Mortlake Churchyard on the very same day in March, 1575, that the Queen paid Dee an unexpected

visit. Dee recorded that Elizabeth arrived "accompanied by her most honourable Privy Council and other her lords and nobilitie." His wife had only been dead four hours and, hearing this, the Queen declined to enter the house, but asked Dee to bring out and show her the "magic glass of which she had heard so much."⁵

The Queen dismounted from her horse in a nearby field so that Dee could show her the glass. He fetched it out of his house and, according to his own account, "Her Majestie, being taken down from her horse by the Earl of Leicester, Master of the Horse, at the church wall of Mortlake, did see some of the properties of that magic glass to Her Majestie's great contentment and delight."⁶ It was an episode not merely recorded by Dee in his diary, but cherished by Edmund Spenser who wove the story into the tapestry of his *Faerie Queene*, describing how Britomart, a character based on that of the Queen herself, wanted to see her lover in "the globe which Merlin made":

*By straunge occasion she did him behold,
And much more straungely gan to love his sight,
As in bookes hath written beene of old.
In Deheubarth, that now South-Wales is Hight,
What time King Ryence raign'd and dealed right,
The great magitien Marlin had devis'd,
A looking-glasse, right wondrously aguiz'd,
Whose vertue had to shew in perfect sight
Whatever thing was in the world contaynd,
Betwixt the lowest earth and hevens hight,
So that it to a looker appertaynd:
Whatever foe had wrought, or frend had faynd,
Therein discovered was, ne ought mote pas,
Ne ought in secret from the same remaynd;
Frothy it round and hollow shaped was,
Like to the Worlde it selfe, and seemed a world of glas.*

Here again fiction has gilded one of the incidents in Dee's life into something totally different from what the facts warrant. Later accounts have variously described the "magical glass" as "a piece of polished coal", "a concave mirror", "volcanic glass" and "a glittering globe". Because Dee himself used the phrase "magic glass in referring to it, later writers, including Edith Sitwell, have

suggested that it must have been the same "magical glass" used by Dee in his crystal-gazing experiments. This is in any case wrong, as most contemporary authorities agree that Dee did not become interested in crystalomancy until 1581 when he was fifty-four years old. Certainly he did not refer to crystal-gazing in any of his diaries until that date.

In any event the marginal sketches in Dee's manuscripts show that he possessed more than one speculum and a variety of glasses and mirrors, used for different purposes and that over the years he was constantly acquiring more of them.

The most probable explanation of this incident is that the "magical glass" was a concave mirror. His own account of the affair suggests that after looking in the "glass" the Queen and her courtiers laughed heartily and that, despite the hardly cold corpse of Dee's dead wife in the house near-by, a momentary gaiety came over the scene. This would suggest that the object they were examining was a concave mirror capable of distorting the human body into grotesque images. This might seem a dangerous trick to display to a Tudor monarch, but fortunately Elizabeth had a keen sense of humour. As we have seen, Dee was always experimenting with mirrors and working out ingenious theories in connection with them. He was one of the first to suggest that mirrors could be used for signalling and even composed a simple code for flashing messages across the Thames. He not only predicted the invention of the telescope, but urged that perspective glasses should be installed in every one of Her Majesty's ships.

This is a far more probable explanation than that Dee was permitting the Queen in front of Leicester and her courtiers to have a glimpse of her future husband in a crystal, as some have opined. For Dee consistently predicted that the very appearance of a prospective husband spelt danger for her.

Quite possibly Dee had demonstrated with his signalling mirror across the Thames and the Queen wished to see some of these mirrors for herself, paying an informal call without warning. He had been lobbying at Court for the creation of a coastguard service for England's defence.

TREASURE TROVE AND A PLAN FOR THE NAVY

IT IS curious that nothing is known about Dee's first marriage and that during this very short period of his life he made no reference to her. All we learn from his own accounts is that the Queen sent him "a verie gracious letter of credit for my marriage." But neither the name of his bride, nor the place of marriage is revealed.¹

Possibly the marriage contributed to his financial difficulties. About this time he was urgently seeking more funds and sounding out the possibilities of a new living. Blanche Parry and Mistress Scudamore, lady-in-waiting to Anne, Countess of Warwick, had urged his claims to the Mastership of Saint Cross at Winchester, but nothing came of this. There is a hint of financial difficulties in a letter Dee sent to Lord Burghley in 1574, in which he asked for a licence to search for treasure. In the summer of that year he had been in Radnorshire, the home of his ancestors, where he seems to have been doing some genealogical research as well as visiting ancient churches and sites of ruined castles. Later he went to Glastonbury which he believed to be "a veritable theashor howse of all that is most miraculous, scientific and worthie of the closest attention in the arts, lerning and mechanical construtions of our forebears." This visit may well have touched off his enthusiasm for treasure-hunting, for he paid great attention to Glastonbury and the complex Temple of the Stars in that vicinity. On 3 October he wrote to Burghley requesting

for "Letters Patent to permit me to search for Threasor Trove and retain it for my use."²

The purpose of the letter was clear enough, though it rambled in parts and there was a hint that such a licence might be an indirect method of rewarding him for services rendered and others yet to be rendered. But many subsequent writers have misconstrued the letter by taking certain passages out of context. One such passage stated that many people had recently told him of "dreames and visions which had revealed where Threasor doth lye hid."

To an Elizabethan mind such a statement, taken on its own, could only mean one thing: that Dee intended to employ demonic magic to locate buried hoards of treasure. Throughout the ages it had been believed that buried treasure could be discovered by means of the magic arts. In the early part of the sixteenth century there had been a widespread belief that one method of doing this was by conjuring up spirits. Henry VIII had given Lord Curzon the right for a treasure-hunting monopoly in Norfolk and Suffolk, so that this could have been taken as a precedent for Dee's request. But the purposes of Dee were totally different from those of Curzon. The latter had passed on his rights to one William Smith, of Clopton, and a servant named Amylyon, and they set to work not so much to find hidden hoards as to exploit the monopoly in a most unscrupulous manner. It seems certain that this pair had little idea where treasure was hidden as they rapidly developed an alternative plan for making money. This was to blackmail free-lance treasure-hunters and monopoly-breakers by threatening them with the law unless they handed over sums of money. When they failed to obtain money by extortion they called in the aid of priests who were known to dabble in occult arts and consulted a school-master, George Dowsing, famed for his knowledge of the stars.

Another priest of the period, William Stapleton, who was charged with being a magician, had the contemporary belief in treasure-hunting by magical powers. He made a study of the whole subject from ancient books and then set off on a quest for

treasure in Norfolk. But he had no luck whatsoever in his activities.

Without doubt Dee knew all about the bogus treasure-hunters and the superstition that the discovery of treasure trove was linked with sorcery. The statutes against sorcery made the discovery of hidden treasure "by the aid of magic" a penal offence, punishable by death, if persistently attempted. This would be one reason why Dee wanted his own treasure-hunting to be legalised through a licence from the State. With his reputation among the ignorant for being a conjuror, he would not wish to risk prosecution and the suggestion that he was intent on copying the methods of Dowsing and Stapleton is both unfair and ridiculous. He was constantly trying to remove the impression that he was addicted to demonic magic. In his letter to Burghley he made it clear that such prospecting did not come under the heading of magic in the demonic sense of the word, but that his own quests would be in accordance with scientific practice, utilising new modes of divining precious metals by means of a rod, for which "some persons have super-normal powers not of a magitien, but of a peculiar and scientific qualitie."

Dee's motives were not entirely mercenary and his ultimate plan involved something far more ambitious. It was true, as is already evident from his project in Mary's reign, that he wanted to rescue ancient treasures that might have been buried during the Reformation period, though these he wanted to see saved for the nation, not for himself. But his main aim was to seek for riches in the overseas territories more than in England and Wales. He believed that his own researches had given him special facilities, allied to his scientific discoveries, to divine hidden treasures both artificial and natural, and he offered to use his talents in the service of the State and under the protection of Royal Letters Patent, saying he would do his utmost to discover gold and silver mines for the Queen's own use.

"The value of a mine is matter for the King's Treasure, but a pott or two or three hundred pounds hid in the ground, wall or tree, is but the price of a good book, or instrument for perspective astronomy, or some feat of importance."³

No doubt Dee was being wily in making this request, stressing the value of mines, while suggesting that mere treasure hidden in the earth might possibly be regarded as his own perquisite. In the letter to Burghley he had made a curious diagram of ten localities in various counties, marked by crosses, near which he believed treasure was concealed.

Little or nothing seems to have come out of this request immediately, though later a grant of royalties on mines was made to him. The fact that there was such a grant suggests not only that his request was taken seriously, but that it was more practical than some writers have indicated. Without question Dee's long-term aim was to find for the Queen sources of precious minerals both at home and in the new lands overseas.

As to his using demonic magic as an aid to finding treasure trove, he made it clear that he pinned his faith in a divining-rod and his own peculiar talents in using this. These talents he employed in various parts of the country, more often than not on other people's behalf. He was often called in to find some missing object of value and, invariably, with the aid of maps and a hazel twig, supplemented by a dowsing pendulum, he would eventually locate the article. Goody Faldo, who nursed Dee in his last days, told John Aubrey that "he did most miraculously have the divining power to find thynges that be missing and with his rod did bring back to manie persons silver and such objects which had been missing sometimes over yeres."

Perhaps the knowledge that he had some kind of divining power, call it extra-sensory perception, or dowsing, made Dee believe that this could be applied to more serious things and that this led him quite naturally to take up scrying. One does not know exactly what Dee's divining-rod resembled. There are suggestions of a hazel twig and a "pendulum". Judging from the limited evidence that exists of the finding of water, minerals and other hidden things by what is somewhat vaguely called "divining", his equipment could have consisted of a twig, or a length of copper-wire twisted into a V-shape, or even simply of a pendulum suspended from a short length of string. Such equipment is still used by dowsers today and is sometimes employed

in conjunction with a map. Perhaps the best parallel that can be drawn with Dee's methods is a quotation from an article in *Prediction*, of September, 1965, by J. Armshaw, describing his search for a missing ring belonging to his wife. "I immediately set about locating it by using the pendulum and a rough map of the house, which I drew on a piece of paper....I moved the pendulum over every inch of the map, only to find I could not get the slightest response. Having satisfied myself that the ring was not in the house, I drew another map of the outside surroundings. Once more I worked over the map. This time I got a strong swinging motion of the pendulum at a spot corresponding to a corner of the back-yard.

"Getting a divining stick, I walked towards the spot, and held it out. The stick suddenly bent downwards, and there among the rubble lay the lost ring. It should be pointed out here that when I take a pendulum and hold it over a map, while concentrating on a mental picture of some lost article, I get a reaction at a certain spot. What the connexion is here between mind and matter I do not know, but on the few occasions on which I have tried this, the lost article has turned up at the spot indicated."

Dee spent several months in Radnorshire about this time and from his correspondence in this period it is clear that he was trying to establish his ancestry. A letter of his addressed to Nicholas ap Meredith at Presteigne, beginning "Dear Cousin Nicholas", blamed another cousin, Watkin ap G[wyn] "for his great negligence used towards me...I did put into his hands certain matters of mine confirming of matters—the Pedigree of our Ancestors."⁴ Shortly afterwards Dee was granted a crest with the motto *Hic Labor*.⁵

His activities at this time were manifold. During 1575–76 he was concerned in treasure-hunting, navigational experiments, genealogy, archaeology, seeking out ancient camp sites in Radnorshire, working out a system of naval signals by flashing messages by mirror from tall cliffs and insisting on the development of a form of telescope.

If proof were needed that Dee's real purpose in seeking treasure was not by occult mumbo-jumbo at home, but by

voyages of discovery overseas, his activities in 1575-76 provide it. In 1576 he accompanied Martin Frobisher on a secret voyage in quest of gold in Labrador. This fact more than any other gives the lie to the stories that Dee was conjuring up demons in the English countryside to dig up buried treasure.

It is true that this voyage was also part of the quest for a North-west Passage for which Dee had been planning many years. In the early years Dee had worked diligently on this project with Edward Dyer, who had been in the pay of Leicester. Dyer, who had been left £80,000 in cash and £4,000 a year by his father, had the means to finance voyages of discovery and Dee had long tried to get Dyer to finance some of his schemes for exploration. Dyer had written a treatise on England as the head of a northern empire based on command of the seas and Dee in his *Atlanticall Discourses* had made a plea for the discovery of a North-west Passage to the new world which would provide the answer to England's problems. The expeditions of Willoughby, Chancellor and Jenkinson had all failed to reach the Far East. Yet the Spaniards had found a way there by Magellan's Strait and the Portuguese by means of the Cape of Good Hope. Dee suggested that English seamen could find a route leading round Labrador from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Frobisher was enthusiastic about the project which he described as "the only thing in the world left undone whereby a notable mind might be made famous and fortunate." It was a typically Elizabethan approach to such an adventure.

Shortly before Frobisher's trip in search of the North-west Passage to Cathay Dee called at Muscovy House in Seething Lane for a conference with Frobisher. The company's secretary, Michael Lok, reported that Dee "took pains to set out the rules of geometry and cosmography for the instructions of the master and mariners in the use of instruments", adding that both Frobisher and Hall sent him a letter of thanks.⁶

Apart from giving the explorers the benefit of his technical experience, Dee had amassed considerable information of value to them from his findings of maps and charts in other lands, many from Rome and Antwerp, and from first-hand accounts from

other voyagers. Not the least important part of Dee's Intelligence work was the collecting of information for Elizabeth's navigators and explorers. Here he was unquestionably aided by his own scholarship, being able to sift the credible from the fictitious. Richard Hakluyt owed a great deal of his histories of discovery to Dee. It was from the latter that he learned of the supposed voyage of Nicholas of Lynne, a Carmelite monk, to the North Pole in the fourteenth century. According to Dee this voyage took place about 1360 and he quoted as his authorities Gerardus Mercator and James Cnoyen of Bois-le-Duc, a Dutch explorer. Dee was fascinated by the exploits of Nicholas and based some of his sailing instructions for the finding of a North-west Passage on what he claimed were notes left behind by Nicholas.

For fifteen years Frobisher and Dee worked on the preliminary details of the voyage which at last they undertook in 1576. They only had two very small ships in which to explore the Polar waters, the *Michael*, of twenty-five tons, and the *Gabriel*, of twenty tons. The Queen watched their departure from her palace at Greenwich.

Dee's part in this voyage is obscure. He was convinced that gold could be found in the North-west territories and this is believed to have been one reason why he was a shareholder, albeit a small one, in the enterprise. Hakluyt said he invested £25 in the voyage.⁷

When confronted with mountainous seas to the north of Scotland the captain of the *Michael* turned around and came home, convinced that Frobisher must have perished. But Frobisher and Dee carried on in the *Gabriel* past Cape Farewell to the ice-bound shores near Hudson Bay. Frobisher did not see the straits later discovered by Hudson, but sailed further north where he found an inlet which he firmly believed must be the passage for which they were searching. But severe conditions and ice-bound seas made further navigation impossible, so they returned to England. The voyage had provided them with an excellent reason for further exploration, for as well as capturing an Eskimo they carried back to London what was their most triumphant prize. This, which came to be known as Frobisher's Black Stone, was

an unpolished dark stone which, when thrown on the fire by one of the sailor's wives, glittered like gold. Dee was convinced that it contained the gold for which he had been searching. The stone was examined by gold refiners in London who reported that it contained a quantity of that precious metal.

Thus interest in the North-west Passage became greater; the incentive of gold induced the Queen to provide a new ship of some two hundred tons to be fitted out for a new expedition. Frobisher, now designated High Admiral of all seas and waters, again sailed to the distant north-west, but this time the quest was for gold rather than the North-west Passage. Alas, the "Black Stone Expedition" came to naught and the company formed to promote it lost £10,000.

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Elizabeth continued to see a great deal of Dee and to consult with him on a variety of matters from the cure of her toothache to the appearance in the sky of a new comet in 1577. The comet caused something like consternation at Court, but nevertheless it was a stroke of good fortune for Dee as it provided further justification for his theories on the changing nature of the universe. Pointing out that he had already written on the theme of mysterious new stars appearing in the heavens, Dee seems to have reassured Elizabeth on the subject of the comet, for he noted in his diary: "for three daies [the Queen] did use me," adding that, on parting from her, she "promised unto me great security against any of the Kingdome that would by reason of my rare studies and philosophical exercise unduly seeke my overthrow."

The very phrasing of this note suggests that there were at Court some who saw in the appearance of the comet evidence of Dee's witchcraft. But to some extent the consternation which the comet aroused is understandable: in the sixteenth century there had been more celestial disturbances and discoveries of new heavenly bodies than in any century for five hundred years. This comet, which first appeared in October, 1577, provoked all manner of predictions of woe—earthquakes, famines, plagues

and wars. The same type of report was still circulating in the next century when Johann Kepler, the German astronomer, declared that a comet which had just appeared in the skies foretold the coming of a prince, born in the north of Europe, who would lay waste to the whole of Germany and die in 1632. Kepler lived to see the birth of Gustavus Adolphus in Finland and the Thirty Years' War which he instigated, but died before Gustavus himself fulfilled the final requirements of his prophecy by himself dying in 1632.

Dee was at Court from 22 November until 1 December, 1577 and though the comet may have been one reason for his presence there, it could hardly have been the only one. Shortly after this the Queen was sending Lady Sidney to Dee's house with "pithy and comforting messages and divers rareties from the Queene's table."

Indeed the attachment of Dee to his Sovereign and of her to him was most marked in these years. He was ever ready to go to her at her bidding and she, quite often, would go to him informally and without notice. Throughout this year there were frequent records in his diary of visits to the Queen. "With the Queen for *hora quinta*" was mentioned on the twenty-fifth and the twenty-eighth of November and on the last-named date he was also with Walsingham, having stressed to the Secretary of State the importance of the Queen claiming her rightful "title to Greenland, Esteliland and Friesland." "Esteliland" referred to the southern extremity of Greenland and "Friesland" meant Newfoundland. He was also present at Court for the knighting of his friend, Christopher Hatton, on 1 December.

There may well have been another and more personal reason for his presence at Court at this time, for there is a hint that the Queen herself had been doing some match-making on Dee's behalf. There were sly references to the "sudden astrological interests of dear Jayne, in which We share affection for both subject and teacher." Among the most attractive of the women at Court was one Jane Fromond, lady-in-waiting to Lady Howard of Effingham, daughter of Thomas Fromond, of East Cheam, and to her Dee began to pay close attention.

Jane was then twenty-two, well bred, vivacious, hasty and, it is said, quick tempered. She was a charmer who had already attracted the solicitations of Elizabethan beaux.

She seems to have become enamoured of Dee before he realised what was happening and possibly the Queen knew that her own influence would be needed to bring this dreamer away from his books so that he could realise what a treasure of a human kind was being dangled before his eyes. The man who at Cambridge had dedicated himself to studying for eighteen hours each day was still working long hours and covering a remarkably wide range of activities. All through 1577 he had been organising a study-circle in Neo-Platonism and Renaissance Magic with Philip Sidney, the Earl of Bedford and others from the Court. An example of his talent for arranging Intelligence service in distant lands is revealed by this entry in his diary for 24 March, 1577: "Alexander Simon the Ninivite came to me and promised me his servise into Persia."

He had agents everywhere, in Antwerp, Worms, Amsterdam, Rome, Paris, Moscow, Vienna and Genoa. These people were asked to observe all comings and goings in these places of potentate, envoys, ships and cargoes. Such Intelligence often needed to be paid for and it is evident from the following diary entries that Dee was frequently pressed for money:

"18 June: Borrowed £40 of John Hilton of Fulham."

"19 June: I understood more of Vincent Murfyn his knavery; borrowed £20 of Bartylmew Newsam."

"20 June: Borrowed £27 uppon the chayn of golde."

"18 November: Borrowed £30 of Mr. Edward Hynde of Mortlake to be repayed at Hallowtyde next yere."

Dee was still deeply saddened and concerned at the destruction of the monastic libraries in England and Wales and travelled to all parts of the country to rescue what he could, often pawning an article of silver, or a gold chain, or borrowing from friends to purchase some item to add to his own library. His quest for ancient works was partly because he felt the scholars of earlier generations could supply a missing link between what the Renaissance philosophers propounded and what would, or could,

be discovered in future. But he was also searching for any document, pamphlet, map or chart which would enable him to build up a legal English claim to lands overseas. But the very fact that he spent so much time questing for monastic manuscripts brought the cry of "Popery" down on his head.

No man in the Elizabethan era was so determined to preach imperialism as Dee and it was his dearest wish that the Queen's navy should become the world's police force to bring about a *Pax Britannicum* and world-wide peace and prosperity. It was a dream which was not realised until the nineteenth century, but in the first part of his *General and Rare Memorials pertayning to the perfect art of navigation* his work on *The Brytish Monarchy* (otherwise called the *Petty Navy Royall*) for the *politique security, abundant wealth and the triumphant state of this Kingdome* (with God's favor) *procuring*" he set out the idea in some considerable detail. This was issued in 1577 in an edition of one hundred folio copies by John Davy, the printer to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

His theme was simple, yet grandiloquent, and he followed it up with vigorous propaganda at Court. He visualised England as the lynch-pin of a vast empire extending to all parts of the world, with England as the corporate state and the commonwealth to take precedence over private interests. Stressing the importance of sea power and the creation of a powerful navy, he demanded "a Petty Navy Royall of three score tall ships or more, but in no case fewer." His aim was that in future "neither France, Denmark, Scotland, Spain, nor any other country can have such liberty for invasion...to annoy the blessed state of our tranquillity, as either they have in times past had, or else may have."

Dee's case was brilliantly argued; it was no mere rhetoric, but concisely and cogently set out. He pointed out how piracy on the high seas around England led to the loss of an abundance of money each year through maritime assurance paid out. This menace must be removed. He urged that a properly developed navy should carry out the soundings and searching of all channels, flats, banks and shoals so that there might be a diligent "deciphering of our sea coasts, yea, in the River Thames, also." Dee deplored the lack of modern charts of the British Isles.

Soldiers should be trained to serve in ships "so that in time of great need that expert and hardy crew of some thousands of sea soldiers would be to this realm a treasure incomparable." Thus he foreshadowed the creation of the Royal Marines nearly a century later.

One significant point which Dee made, and here undoubtedly he was influenced by his knowledge of the world of espionage, was that "*sudden* foreign attempts (that is to say, unknown or unheard of to us, before their readiness) cannot be done with great power. For great navies most commonly are espied or heard somewhat of, and that very certainly, while they are in preparing." It is clear from this statement that Dee was sure from his own system of Intelligence that he could anticipate any major invasion threat to England and, as will be seen, he did in fact warn of the building up of the Spanish Armada.

In his Petty Navy Royall "all pirates—our own countrymen—and they be no small number" would be summoned home and offered posts in the new Fleet. He felt sure that their navigational experience would be of inestimable value. Hitting out at the menace of foreign fishermen who robbed British waters of many hundreds of thousands of poundsworth of catches, Dee claimed they presented a double menace to the realm. They not only robbed us of fish, but made charts of the English coastline from their surreptitious soundings and observations, thus giving our enemies an advantage in wartime. He thought that his ideal Navy would cost about £200,000 a year and that this sum could be covered and raised by a tithe tax on foreigners fishing in British waters.

This new Navy was to be arranged as follows:

- (a) a fleet for Ireland;
- (b) a fleet for Scotland;
- (c) a fleet to intercept all privy conspiracies by sea;
- (d) a fleet to deal with the problem of foreign fishermen;
- (e) a fleet to tackle pirates in our own seas and equally to protect friendly foreign ships in our waters, bringing cargoes, from piratical attacks;
- (f) a fleet against all *sudden* foreign efforts. (By this Dee meant surprise attacks by a few enemy ships.)

Such a navy, argued Dee, would be better than "four such forts or towns as Calais and Boulogne." Calais and Boulogne were no longer desirable as bastions of the defence of England because they would be fixed, whereas ships were mobile and could switch the point of defence or attack; moreover there was no longer any intention to attack France, or invade that country, so that ports for landing our troops there were unnecessary.

This plan, he urged, was the "A.B.C. of National Prosperity." "In the total sum of all the foresaid considerations united in one, it seemeth to be almost a mathematical demonstration, next under the merciful and mighty protection of God, for a feasible policy to bring and preserve this victorious British monarchy in a marvellous security. Whereupon the revenue of the Crown of England and wealth public will wonderfully increase and flourish; and then . . . sea forces anew to be increased proportionately. And so Fame, Renown, Estimation and Love, or Fear of this Brytish *Microcosmus* all the whole of the great world over will be speedily spread and surely be settled."

Dee's treatise on naval defence was one of the most far-sighted expositions of its kind that has ever been devised in this country. Here, for the first time, the whole principle of the Freedom of the Seas was carefully laid down. Alas, the money for such an enterprise was not forthcoming, though many of Dee's ideas were adopted haphazardly during the next ten years. As the foremost supporter of the Merchant Adventurers, he believed that these men should be harnessed to the State and given the chance to supplement and develop a powerful, modern navy with ships equal in power to those of Spain. There was a slight difference, however; Dee put his trust in tall, easily manoeuvrable ships rather than top-heavy, clumsy galleons of the Spanish type. And in dealing with the Armada such ships proved him to be right.

He hammered away on the theme of foreign fishermen pilfering our riches and developed his private intelligence service to produce facts and figures to show the extent of these incursions into British waters. More than 500 Spanish ships, sometimes based in the Low Countries, were, he estimated, plundering British fishing grounds. In addition there were 100 French ships

fishing our waters in the English Channel, 300–400 Spanish and French ships were combing the Irish coasts and even around the Welsh coast there were as many as “300 strangers” conducting illegal fishing each year. He calculated that the Flemish herring fishing was worth £490,000 a year, but that it was conducted almost entirely on our coasts. These were formidable figures to rebut, yet it was not until James I’s reign that the herring problem was finally solved and Dee’s campaign for the preservation of fish in the Thames was not carried out until 1618.

Though Dee had many allies at Court, there were others who thought his schemes were too ambitious and too costly. At this time his most notable ally in his defence plans was Christopher Hatton, to whom he dedicated his *Brytish Monarchy* and plea for a grand defensive system in the following rather mediocre verse:

*Whereof such love as I of late
Have lern’d and for security
By Godly means to Garde this State
To you I now send carefully.*

To some extent his views on the urgency of his plans had been conditioned by a visit paid to him at Mortlake in 1577 by the Dutch map-maker, Ortelius. He was convinced that charts of the whole British coast-lines were deplorably behind the times and that in comparison with those which the continentals already had, they were pathetically ineffectual. This he regarded as one of the gravest dangers for England’s security from attack. He asked for the creation of a special post—a “Grand Pilot Generall of England.” Here again he foresaw the need for the adoption of a national chart system and the extension of the Corporation of Trinity House of Deptford, instituted for pilotage measures by Henry VIII to cover the whole of the British Isles. Much later this came about, just as Dee’s proposals for fishery control were eventually put into legislation by an Act of James I which required foreign fishing vessels to obtain a licence to ply our coasts.

Two men, however, were always ready to listen carefully to all he had to say. One was Sir Humphrey Gilbert, another

frequent visitor to Mortlake at this time, and the other was Walsingham. John Dee had been primarily interested in the idea of a North-west Passage, but after recent disappointments in this direction he showed himself equally alive to the possibilities of a North-east Passage and had established correspondence with Russian geographers to obtain more information on this. His *Famous and Rich Discoveries* was largely devoted to Far Eastern geography and discoveries in the Orient. Although the first part of this book dealt with Solomon's Ophirian voyage, the whole work was really a survey of Asia and parts of Europe, with many details on trade and natural resources. There is some evidence that Dee intended this book to be a survey of the entire world, but as some of his manuscript has disappeared, one cannot be certain of his ultimate purpose.

Gilbert was as forthright as Dee in his views of the creation of an empire overseas and he tried hard to get Walsingham's support in 1577 for a plan to attack all Spanish shipping in the Far West as a preliminary manoeuvre. This plan was actually laid before the Queen, but she was still not anxious to provoke a breach with Spain. Walsingham also urged the colonizing of "remote heathen and barbarous lands not actually possessed by any christian prince." Dee played a considerable part in advocating this project and the following year the Queen granted Walsingham a charter to carry it out.

The beginning of 1578 saw Dee a frequent visitor at Court, but this time there was no mistaking the object of his intentions. At the age of fifty-one he had fallen deeply in love with the attractive lady-in-waiting, Jane Fromond, and on 5 February, 1578, he married her. In his diary he recorded it thus: "*Sponsalia cum Jana Fromonds horam circiter primam.*" Despite the fact that she was several years his junior, used to a gay life at Court, the marriage was highly successful and withstood the severest domestic storms and many tribulations. Jane was to be the mother of his eight children and for many years she was not only an unselfish wife and devoted to her children, but a loyal admirer of the strange and somewhat lonely scholar she had married, blindly believing in him when even she might justifiably

have had doubts. She was also held in great esteem by the Queen.

Yet he only occasionally mentioned her in his diary and then, usually, in connection with some quite prosaic incident and with no illuminating portrait of her mannerisms, actions and foibles, or even of his regard for her. He referred to her generally as "Jane", or "my wife", sometimes even after their marriage, as "Jane Fromonds". There is one entry some months after the nuptials in which he notes that "Jane Fromonds also at Court". For some reason he always put an "s" after her name.

About this time there was another epidemic of witchcraft in the realm. Perhaps it was because there was so much talk about black magic and devil worship that people imagined devilry in the slightest incident, or pretended to practise it. It was noticeable that a single well publicised incident that smacked of black magic usually produced a crop of imitators of the cult in succeeding weeks. For a time neither Catholic, nor Puritan was safe from allegations of witchcraft. Even John Knox was accused by his enemies of being seen in conversation with the "Foul Fiend" in the church-yard of St. Andrew's Cathedral. Then, suddenly, whispers were heard in the streets of London that the Queen's life was threatened by black magicians. The whispers were vague, but they caused panic in the capital and people flocked to the royal palaces to seek news of the Queen. It then transpired that a wax image of the Queen, pierced with pins, had been found in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Such was the Queen's faith in Dee that she sent for him as soon as the incident was reported to her. Thus, in time of crisis, when threatened by witchcraft, she depended on the advice of a man who had himself been accused of witchcraft practices. The story goes that he was called in "to counteract ill effects", which may suggest that he sought to neutralise black magic by his own natural magic. This he was said to have done "in a Godly and artificial manner" in the presence of the Earl of Leicester and Mr. Secretary Wilson. At any rate he seems to have quelled her fears, but there is no clear indication as to what advice he gave the Queen. His own view was that this act was one calculated

merely to spread alarm among the population and that it had no more sinister intent.

Dee was now approaching the peak of his career. His political and mathematical works were at last beginning to win for him the same kind of reputation that he had enjoyed for some years on the Continent. His position at Court was secure and throughout 1578–79 he was a constant visitor there. Holinshed and Camden used his library, Richard Hakluyt consulted him on his geographical researches and in setting out claims for the Queen's title to lands overseas. There was an interesting note on the latter in his diary for 30 June, 1878: "I told Mr. Daniel Rogers (Oxon.), Mr. Hakluyt of the Middle Temple that Kyng Arthur and King Maty, both of them, did conquer Gelinda, lately called Friseland, which he so noted presently in his written copy of *Monumenthensis* for he had no printed boke thereof."⁸

This was another example of Dee's researches into ancient legends, even the most improbable legends, in quest of factual information. In this instance he was seeking to prove that earlier British explorers had discovered new lands overseas and these discoveries gave Elizabeth priority over the Spanish king in claims to settle there. It has been argued by scholars that such claims had no factual basis and were merely the building up of legends for propaganda purposes by the Tudors. No doubt propaganda played a part, but it is some measure of the thoroughness of the propagandists that they spent an extraordinarily long time and employed a great many historians to establish, or to try to establish, the truth. Dee himself spent six years collecting information, tracking down old records in Wales and elsewhere, travelling on the continent and consulting foreign historians, before he assembled his material and passed much of it on to Sir George Peckham and Richard Hakluyt. During 1578 he wrote out a full list of various ancient claims of discovery of the New World prior to Columbus' first voyage. These formed the basis of the evidence presented by Sir George Peckham for his tract of 1583 on the Tudor claims to lands in America and for the granting of colonisation rights. This was *A True Reporte*, a pamphlet written by Peckham and dedicated to Sir Francis Walsingham,

setting out briefly "to prove Queen Elizabeth's lawful title to the New Worlde, based on not onlie upon Sir Humphrey Gilbert's discoveries, but also those of Madoc."

For in his researches into the Arthurian legends John Dee had found that the myth that King Arthur had discovered lands in the North-west was more insubstantial than he had first imagined. At some date in the Middle Ages an enterprising bard had foisted on to Arthur some of the feats of later and less well-known adventurers. One of these was the legend that Madoc, an illegitimate son of Owain Gwynedd, ruler of North Wales in the twelfth century, had sailed across the Atlantic and landed in America. Being himself Welsh, Dee was enthralled by this discovery in ancient bardic records, and he diligently followed it up by checking the story with continental authorities.

The land most frequently named in pre-Columbus maps, apart from the Antillia, was the *Insulae Fortunatae*, described by the story-tellers as the Isles of the Blest. Homer had identified them with the Elysian Fields, while in later ages they were gradually identified with islands further distant, first with the Canaries and Madeira, then with Bimini in the West Indies. The Avalon of the King Arthur cycle was also a homologue of this classic myth. Dee, basing his researches not only on the Welsh bards, but on such continental authorities as Ortelius, James Cnoyen, the Dutch explorer, and on a map dating back to before 1400 which, he claimed, showed the track of the voyage of Nicholas of Lynne to the North-west and to an island far out in the Atlantic called *Gwerdonnau Llion*, discovered by Madoc. Dee was of the opinion that this island must therefore have been either "Bermoothes, or an islande in the Bahamas." By "Bermoothes" Dee meant Bermuda, "the still-vexed Bermoothes", as Shakespeare referred to the island in *The Tempest*.

If, originally, Dee had subscribed to the view that King Arthur had been one of the early explorers of the New World, this need not be regarded as evidence of his credibility. It was a view also propounded by George Abbott, Archbishop of Canterbury, and by Gerardus Mercator, Dee's teacher in his youth. But Dee came to the conclusion that Mercator had confused his facts. He

believed that Mercator had been told of Madoc's voyage and that he confused this with a legend about King Arthur. In fact Dee was much more cautious in his interpretation of the Madoc legends than either Hakluyt or Sir George Peckham. He declined to say positively that Madoc reached America, but was convinced that he had reached the vicinity of the Sargasso Sea and landed on one of the islands in that region.

It is highly probable that Dee gave Shakespeare some of his information on Bermuda and that this was used in the writing of *The Tempest*. Bermuda was undoubtedly the isle that was "full of noises, sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not." A number of writers have contended that Prospero in *The Tempest* was Shakespeare's idealised portrait of Dee.

Certainly a close examination of the character of Prospero bears comparison with that of Dee and, more important, *The Tempest* touches lightly, but surely on the theme of the Renaissance Magia and Cabbala. Prospero is the benevolent Magus establishing the ideal state, a dreamer and a man of books, philosopher and mystic. The play was written after Dee's death and it is certain that the sources for it include the shipwreck of Sir George Somers, Sir Thomas Gates and William Strachey which occurred at Bermuda on their voyage to Virginia in 1609. There is an echo of Dee in the epilogue spoken by Prospero:

"... Now I want
 Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;
 And my ending is despair,
 Unless I be relieved by prayer;
 Which pierces so that it assaults
 Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
 As you from crimes would pardon'd be;
 Let your indulgence set me free."

In this play Shakespeare is preoccupied with a noble and significant language that reaches out and engages the gods in conversation. There is the contest between the white magic and noble thoughts of Prospero and the black magic of Caliban.

"... These our actors,
 As I foretold you, were all spirits and

*Are melted into air, into thin air;
 And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
 As dreams are made on, and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleep.—Sir, I am vex'd;
 Bear with my weakness; my old brain is troubled:
 Be not disturb'd with my infirmity:
 If you be pleased, retire into my cell,
 And there repose; a turn or two I'll walk,
 To still my beating mind."*

Through Dee Shakespeare may have been made familiar with the Hermetic philosophy of Giordano Bruno. There are hints of Bruno's influence not only in *The Tempest*, but also in *Love's Labour Lost*. Many writers have argued that the character of Biron in this play is based on that of Bruno and was prompted by his visit to England. It is an interesting speculation and not without some foundation, for it was essentially a play performed for a courtly rather than a popular audience and many lines in it are either hardly intelligible, or can be variously interpreted by a modern reader. But in Biron's speech about love there is a distinct suggestion of the *Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante* in which all the gods speak in praise of love in one of the constellations:

*"For valour, is not Love a Hercules,
 Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
 Subtle as Sphinx, as sweet and musical
 As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair;
 And, when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
 Make heaven drowsy with the harmony."*

It is true that Bruno came to preach his occultism and new philosophy in England, and that his exposition was regarded with suspicion as a kind of occult counter-Reformation. But Dee and Bruno were close friends and especially so at the Court of Navarre, which Dee visited, and Shakespeare writes of Navarre as becoming "the wonder of the world; Our court shall be a little

Academe, Still and contemplative in living art." It was here at the Court of Navarre that Bruno was the leader of poets, philosophers and devotees to the cult of romantic love. Shakespeare never visited the Court of Navarre, but Dee may well have given him the ideas of Bruno to conjure into a tantalising "pleasant, conceited comedie", a play of ideas linked with a plea for love and tolerance. If *Love's Labour's Lost* has a message, it is that a man should be free to speak in any country of the world and say what he thought, without fear or favour. In another sense it could be interpreted as a plea for Love as a religion in its own right, to be set against what the bigots and pedants had made of Christianity. Here, at one subtle stroke, Shakespeare struck a blow against both Puritans and fanatical dogmatists in Rome in a play which was performed before the Queen and intended primarily for her courtiers. The two bigots are Holofernes, the school-master and an obvious skit on an extreme Puritanical Protestant, and Don Adriano de Arnado, the "fantastical Spaniard".

Shakespeare enjoyed many sly jokes in *Love's Labour's Lost* and it is not without significance that he referred to the School of Night, organised by Christopher Marlowe, and in which Raleigh and others discussed science and "comparative religion", taking night as the symbol for the deep knowledge hidden from the vulgar. Marlowe, too, had suffered from the extremists who saw blasphemy and treason in every questioning word.

“A PIONEER IN SPIRITUALISM”

IN OCTOBER, 1578, both Leicester and Walsingham, representing the “war party” at Court, were dismayed at what they regarded as the political vacillations of the Queen. She still mistrusted the Netherlands rebels, though she lent them money. They urged her to send men as well as money to the Low Countries, but the Queen would not countenance war.

Elizabeth was, in fact, gambling on being able to avoid war and to retain the balance of power by doing so. Thus she believed that if the Spaniards had sovereignty in the Netherlands, this would keep the French out; at the same time she wanted to see the Dutch sufficiently masters in their own land that they would not permit Spain to use the Low Countries as a base for operations against England. It was a dangerous policy and Leicester and Walsingham hated it, but it was not without merits if time played into Elizabeth’s hands.

“There are signs preceding the end of the world,” wrote an English Puritan in a letter to a friend. “Satan is roaring like a lion, the world is going mad, Anti-Christ is resorting to every extreme, that he may with wolf-like ferocity devour the sheep of Christ.” Such was the gloom with which Puritans and the pro-war party alike viewed the situation in Europe.

Walsingham was convinced that the Queen was sick and that this was affecting her judgement. With Leicester he sponsored an appointment for Dee to see the Queen and to get her permission to consult with German doctors on her rheumatism and health generally. This was but one reason for Dee’s trip to Hamburg

and Frankfurt in October, 1578. He was also seeking German aid in the Netherlands. If the Queen would not agree to send English troops to fight, then others must be found to help the Dutch in their struggle against Spain. Dee was given the task of seeking German mercenaries to help the rebels. It proved ultimately to have been a wiser move than provoking war with Spain at this stage. But Walsingham remained unconvinced: "Our remedy must be prayer," he cried in despair, "for other help I can see none."

Later in the year Dee was again sent abroad. This time his various missions were masked by the official reason for his tour—that he had gone to consult foreign physicians on a cure for the Queen's toothache. The trouble was that the Queen hated to be ill, or even to be thought ill. A tooth had been giving her trouble during the year, but her own doctors were afraid to tell her it ought to come out.

On his return to Mortlake Dee's mother made over into his name the deeds of the house and all lands attached. This was carried out about a month before Dee's first child was born. The old lady continued to live in the house until her death.

In July, 1579, Dee recorded in his diary the birth of his son Arthur: "*Mane hor 4 min. 30 fere, vel potius min. 25, in ipso ortu solis, ut existimo.*" The child's godfathers at the christening were Edward Dyer and Dr. Lewis, a judge of the Admiralty, and Mistress Blanche Parry, the Queen's old nurse and Dee's cousin, was his godmother.

The next month found Dee deeply involved in intrigues at Court. During most of the year various efforts, some open and others secretive, had been made to renew the project of a marriage between the Queen and Alençon of France. The Puritans waxed furiously against the proposal in sermons and pamphlets. The gayer of the Protestants cynically made bets on the subject, offering odds of three to one against a marriage. Once again Alençon sent his skilled envoy, Jean de Simier ("*mon pauvre singe*") to do his wooing by proxy. There were the usual stories about witchcraft, that Simier gave the Queen love potions and even that he had himself made love to her. Certainly Simier showed

a sense of humour when he signed a letter to the Queen "*à jamais le singe votre.*"

But Alençon became impatient for results. Risking a rebuff, for he must have known that Walsingham was vehemently against the marriage, he came over to London in disguise. Only the Queen and Simier were in the secret. But somehow John Dee knew all about it, for on 16 August he noted in his diary "Monsieur cam secretly to the Court from Calais."

Alençon arrived while the Queen was still asleep and Simier had the greatest difficulty in stopping him from rushing into her bed-chamber and kissing her as she slept. Simier left a typically Gallic note for the Queen, saying that his master had arrived and that he had put him to bed, adding "Would to God it was by your side."

For nearly two weeks Queen and French suitor dallied with each other in solitude, exchanging presents and protestations of love. At least Alençon seems to have made the loudest protestations of devotion, swearing eternal faithfulness and declaring he was Elizabeth's affectionate slave.

In the face of widespread hostility to the marriage plan Elizabeth decided that it would be folly to go ahead against both her advisers and her people. It was her last chance of marriage and in her heart she knew this. It was perhaps the chief reason why she clung desperately to this only possible alliance long after her head told her that it could endanger her throne. She was now forty-six and the prospects of producing an heir were almost negligible. No other suitor remotely acceptable was in the running. At first she was distraught and in tears and in no mood to face her counsellors. Then she recovered something of that fighting, independent spirit which she had inherited from her father. If the people were against her marriage to Alençon, if a majority of her courtiers were openly hostile, so be it. The unity of England and the security of her throne came first. But she would not surrender tamely to the howl of opposition. She would let her advisers know what she thought of their interference and, while not going ahead with the marriage, would leave them guessing as to her ultimate intentions. So one and all of the critics were

berated. Walsingham was told that the only purpose he served was that of protecting the Puritans and that he had no mind for anything else. He was banished from the Queen's presence for some months. Thus, without surrendering abjectly, while hoping for marriage in her heart, but accepting its futility in her head, and with a fine show of spirit and dignity, the Queen allowed the whole question to sink slowly into oblivion. Yet for the next few years there still hung a question mark over the whole subject of her marriage to Alençon.

* * *

In the early days of his marriage Dee relaxed from his studies occasionally to provide some gaiety and amusement for his young wife. Though a serious-minded scholar frequently bent over his books and manuscripts for days at a stretch, he was also a typical man of his age in that he balanced a love of learning with a delight in carnivals, masked balls and lively recreation. Poetry and learning, in fact, flowed into all facets of life, enlivening the pleasures of the age, lending beauty to simple recreations and embracing the common people in all walks of life, with the exception of the narrowest of the Puritans, still in a minority.

It was an age that had among its youth at least some of the attributes of the nineteen-sixties in Britain, a fondness for experiment in pleasures, in dress and in recreation. Swashbuckling young rakes would indulge in flamboyant colours and give them original names such as "goose-turd green", "popinjay blue" and "maiden-hair brown". The "pretty prizels", as teenage maidens were called, started new fashions in decoration, wearing, for example, a wild strawberry plant on their sleeves instead of a conventional flower.

Dee is said to have started pell-mell steeplechases in the Mortlake and Richmond area and to have kept hounds. It is hard to picture this scholar steeplechasing, but we are told he was "a goodlie horseman". Each May Day he revived a Celtic custom, no doubt borrowed from his Welsh ancestors, of kindling a bonfire on the top of Richmond Hill. This was marked by great revelry, Dee entertaining his guests to an *al fresco* meal at which

there were "pots of silver filled with claret, silver bowls of grapes ... and a display of fireworks and dancing." He also paid for and had constructed a maypole, one hundred and fifty feet high, which was erected in the Strand.

The fertility and originality of Dee's mind was always surprising. Sometimes his schemes were extravagantly wild and costly, more often they were fundamentally sound but so much in advance of even educated public opinion that they stood little chance of fulfilment. One of his more far-sighted schemes at this time was to solve the problem of an empire overseas and that of dissension at home in one and the same move. His plan was that Catholics who felt they had been persecuted, or were under threat of persecution, or who wished to leave the country, should be given the chance to emigrate to the New World on the understanding that they remained loyal to the Crown. Dee mapped out an area of some 1,500,000 acres between Florida and Cape Breton which were to be colonised. A register of names of Catholics who had been persecuted, or who lived under threat of imprisonment, or who were suspected of intrigue, was to be drawn up and submitted to the Queen for approval. Dee's primary object was to thwart Spanish plans for an American empire and to establish English influence along a great expanse of the Atlantic coast. He first interested Sir Thomas Gerrard, who was himself a Papist, and his friend, Sir George Peckham, who was a Roman Catholic sympathiser, writing to the latter that: "By setting upp a colonie in Florida and importing thereto persons of a Papist conscience yet still loyal to Her Majestie we can prevent the mischief which might be wrought if these same persons were to voyage to Spayne and France, whence their loyalty would be impeded and suborned."¹

Humphrey Gilbert thoroughly approved the plan, though on the understanding that if he undertook the expedition to colonise these territories, he should receive guaranteed annual payments. Dee seems to have kept his part in the plan secret from all except Peckham. To Walsingham he reported that the expedition had been planned and that most of the names on the register were Catholics, but appears to have taken good care not to reveal

himself as the author of the proposal. Undoubtedly he advised Walsingham that English Catholics would be much less dangerous in America than if they remained in England, or went to the Continent. It would seem that Walsingham approved the scheme, if one accepts the evidence of Bernardino de Mendoza, Spanish Ambassador to England, that Walsingham "intimated that if they [the Catholics] would help Humphrey Gilbert in the voyage, their lives and liberties might be saved and the Queen in consideration of their service might be asked to allow them to settle there [Florida] in the enjoyment of freedom of conscience and of their property in England."²

Both France and Spain, as well as Portugal, had decided on a policy of excluding religious dissenters from their colonies. One would have thought therefore that logically, holding such views, they would have welcomed Walsingham's plan as giving them a chance to have sympathisers in the enemy's camp. Perhaps this was how Walsingham himself thought the Spaniards would react. But he was mistaken: the Spanish Ambassador did his best to obstruct the scheme. It was not until four years later that funds for a bold emigration project were raised, and Dee's dream of dissenters becoming loyal English subjects overseas was not fulfilled until the next century when it was mainly the Nonconformists and Puritans who emigrated and not the Catholics.

But Dee pressed on with plans for emigration notwithstanding the difficulties. He helped to raise funds in London and Southampton and with the Muscovy Company in Bristol. He worked hard to improve the navigational aids that were being put in the new ships, and drew up new charts and sailing instructions for the mariners. Drake, Raleigh and Hawkins, as well as Frobisher and Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert, all came to him for guidance as his diary testifies. He told how "Sir Humphrey Gilbert granted me my request to him, made by letter, for the royalties of discoverie all to the north above the parallel of the 50 degree of latitude, in the presence of Stoner, Sir John Gilbert and his servant."³ On another occasion he noted that "young Mr. Hawkins who had been with Mr. Drake cam to me at Mortlake."⁴

Towards the end of 1597 he was at Muscovy House, "drawing

charts for the Captains Charles Jackson and Arthur Pett for their North-East journey to Cathay."

There was some dissension over offers of livings. Dee seems always to have been offered livings he did not want. Lord Clinton proposed he should have the living of Skirbeck-by-Boston in exchange for Long Leadenham, but he declined it. He coveted the Provostship of Eton and friends tried to obtain this for him, but without success.

Dee's critics have alleged that he was obsessed with the idea of discovering that will-o'-the-wisp of ancient alchemists—the Elixir of Life, or the Philosopher's Stone. The grounds for such allegations are thin indeed. An entry from his diary on 28 December, 1579, will give a clue to the misinterpretation of what he was seeking: "I reveled to Roger Coke the gret secret of the Elixir of the Salt of Metals, the projection whereof was one upon an hundred." The so-called "Philosopher's Stone" was in fact a mixture of powder which removed the impurities of baser metals. The "Elixir of Life" was gold in a liquid form—a drinkable liquid, *aurum potabile*, not unlike the gold-flecked liqueur consumed in modern times.

There was one curious visitor noted in his diary on 7 June, 1580: "The Queen's Dwarf, Mrs. Tomasin, at my house." Elizabeth was said to have detested dwarfs and deformed people of any description, yet she kept Mrs. Tomasin as a kind of royal pet at Court and was apparently devoted to her. Dee made no reference to the purpose of this visit, but Dyer suggests that she was an intermediary between the Queen and Dee: "Mrs. Tomasin, that bearer of secrets twixt the Queene and her astrologer." This may well have been so, for Mrs. Tomasin was by repute a woman with a remarkable memory who could recite long passages of verse and recall dates and events with no apparent effort. It could be that Dee used this gifted memory as a means of communication with Elizabeth.

Certainly the Queen and Dee remained on good, even affectionate terms. On 17 September, 1580, we learn that the Queen travelled to Richmond in her coach and that "whan she cam right up againste the Church she turned down towards my

howse: and when she was againste my garden in the felde she stode there a good while, and then came ynto the street at the great gate of the felde, where she espayed me at my doore making obeysains to Her Majestie; she beckend her hand for me: I cam to her coach side, she very speedily pulled off her glove and gave me her hand to kiss; and to be short, asked me to resort to her Court, and to give her to wete when I cam ther."

A few days after this Dee's mother died at the age of seventy-seven and her son recorded her "godly end". The next day the Queen visited him and exhorted him to "take my mother's death patiently and withall told me that the Lord Treasurer had gretly commended my doings for her title, which he had to examyn, which title in two rolls he had brought home two howrs before. She remembered allso how at my wife's death it was her fortune likewise to call uppon me."

Slander and abuse were still being heaped on Dee by his enemies and those jealous of his influence at Court. His diary makes frequent reference to letters of attorney against people for slander. On 20 October of that same year the Jury at the Guild-hall awarded him one hundred pounds damages against Vincent Murphy, "the cosener".

Dee kept copious notes, often illustrated with marginal diagrams and sketches, of his observations of the stars and it is perhaps significant that these were free from any suggestion of cabballistic symbolism and kept meticulously to sober facts. He seems to have maintained an especially close watch on the mysterious comet which so disturbed Tudor England. A rough sketch of this phenomenon, which he made, revealing a long tail, suggests that it must have been an elliptical comet, as it was seen more than once, and watched by Dee until he finally recorded in his diary: "the blasing star I cold see no more, though it was a cler night." On another occasion he noted that "abowt $8\frac{1}{2}$ (at night) a strange meteore in forme of a white clowde crossing galaxiam, whan it lay north and sowth over our zenith; this clowd was at length from the South-East to South-West sharp at both endes, and in the weste ende it was forked for a while. It was abowt sixty

degrees high, it lasteth an howr, all the skye clere abowt, and fayr starshine."

In 1581 a daughter, Katherine, was born to John and Jane Dee. She was a constant delight to her father and it has been said that the character of Miranda in *The Tempest* was also based to some extent on Katherine.

Not only the Elizabethan seamen came to Dee for navigational advice; those of other nations equally sought it, sometimes coming to Mortlake, at others corresponding with Dee personally. Through his contacts with foreign sea captains Dee gathered a wide range of intelligence reports for Walsingham. Most of these mariners came from Germany and the Low Countries. One such was John Leonard Haller, of Hallerstein, near Worms, Dee noting that Haller had "received his instructions manifold for his jorney to Quinsay [North China], which jorney I moved him unto and instructed him plentifully for the variation of the compass, observing in all places as he passed."

* * *

During 1581 Dee became suddenly preoccupied with his dreams and troubled by them. It is not clear whether the dreams themselves were the cause of his obsession with them, or whether he had himself stimulated his mind into producing troubled dreams by taking an increasing interest in experiments in extra-sensory perception. Certainly the advent of the dreams coincided with his devoting more of his time to studies of the occult and to the arts of scrying and telepathy.

Sometimes he had disturbing and frightening dreams of strange noises. These dreams began in March, 1581, and continued at intervals over the next two years. They could be explained by the fact that in this period he was often in peril and undergoing severe mental stress in his work. On 8 March, 1581, he wrote in his diary: "The strange noyse in my chamber of knocking, and the voice ten times repeated somewhat like the scrich of an owle, but more longly drawne, and more softly, as it were in my chamber." And again, on a hot August night the same year he noted that "all the night strange knocking and rapping in my

chamber" and on the following day his diary recorded: "and this night likewise."

A year later he dreamed "that I was deade, and afterwards my bowels were taken out I walked and talked with diverse, and among other with the Lord Threaseror who was com to my house to burn my bokes when I was dead and thought he loked sourely on me."

Likewise he carefully noted the dreams of his wife. "This night my wife dreamed that one cam to her and touched her, saying 'Mistress Dee, you are conceived of childe, whose name must be Zacharias: be of good chere, he sal do well as this doth.'"

The period of frequent dreams coincided with the beginning of Dee's interest in crystalomancy. It was on 25 May, 1581, that he first made reference to this in his diary: "I had sight offered me in chrystallo and I saw."

He had always had a passion for glass and mirrors of all kinds and had collected distorting mirrors, concave and convex, prisms and lenses from all over Europe, as well as manufacturing optical instruments himself. He applied his knowledge of geometry to optics and used distorting mirrors to play conjuring tricks for his guests. It is also possible that he used his distorting mirrors to work out codes. Some tiny marginal sketches in his manuscript notes depict an object, with lines leading to a tiny circle, which presumably depicts a mirror, and with lines leading from the mirror to a *hieroglyphic* which appears to be a magnified, reversed image. In other words, Dee would focus his mirror on normal writing and obtain a slightly distorted and reversed image which he would carefully copy down as the code.

But his earlier references to "magic glasses", as we have seen, do not appear to refer either to a crystal ball, or any other kind of glass used for crystal-gazing. The term "magical" was used by Dee in referring to almost any mechanical contraption and might equally be applied to distorting mirrors, kaleidoscopes, prisms, signalling mirrors or a primitive telescope.

His interest in crystalomancy was undoubtedly stimulated by his visits to the continent and contacts with Renaissance Cab-

balists and, above all, by his genuine desire to explore the possibilities of spiritualism, though doubtless he would have used a very different phrase for describing this. It is clear that he himself had no mediumistic powers, but that he was eternally in quest of those who might possess them. Not unnaturally this made him prone to be exploited by the unscrupulous. On the other hand his honesty in admitting that he had no especial gifts in this direction is surely proof that Dee personally was no deceiver, or self-styled magician and that he made no claims to be clairvoyant. But his unusual talent in using a divining-rod led him to believe at first that he might be similarly successful with crystal-gazing.

The nocturnal noises which he reported may have been magnified and distorted in his half-awake mind as a result of his hidden yearnings for a form of spiritual intercourse with the unseen. One feels that he was constantly noting down minor phenomena which another man would have dismissed as being of no account and that he was always trying to read into these incidents a supernatural explanation of what were probably entirely natural happenings.

The truth was that, despite his preoccupation with affairs of State and essentially practical matters, Dee hungered for revelations of unseen and undiscovered truths. This was no more than the hall-mark of the Renaissance scholar, but Dee's thirst for such knowledge was greater than that of most. In the darkness of his bedroom he sought the light that he hoped his dreams would bring him and in the silence of his study he yearned for messages from the unseen to break the stillness of his meditations. Perhaps that is to dramatise what actually went on in his mind, but there was a religious quality of humility about these meditations, a feeling that only a superhuman effort of concentration would enable him to acquire that higher knowledge that was hidden from most mortals.

The religious approach of the believers in natural magic is best summed up by D. P. Walker: "A very few pro-magicians, such as Pomponazzi, explained all religious effects, including miraculous ones, by natural (psychological and astrological) causes; and

some very liberal Catholic magicians had no objection to identifying religious and magical practices. The historical importance of these connexions between magic and religion is, I think, that they led people to ask questions about religious practices and experiences which would not otherwise have occurred to them; and, by approaching religious problems through magic, which was at least partially identical with, or exactly analogous to religion, but which could be treated without reverence or devotion, they were able sometimes to suggest answers which, whether true or not, were new and fruitful.”⁵

This was the teaching in which Dee himself believed. It was only unorthodox in the fanaticism and determination with which Dee quested for this “unseen knowledge”. St. Thomas Aquinas himself had theories that there were two kinds of prophecies or revelations: one, which was given by God in visions and was, therefore, inflexible; the other was subject to changing conditions which the prophet did not anticipate intellectually. Presumably St. Thomas was trying to explain the partially true prophecy.

Dee was a keen student of Agrippa’s occult philosophy and in Agrippa’s third book there are elaborate numerical and alphabetical tables for “the summoning of angels”. This was simply the religious-romantic phraseology of the Renaissance neo-Platonists for what today would be called spiritualism, telepathy or extra-sensory perception, according to the temperament of the person engaged in such mental exercises. It is only when these phrases are interpreted literally that misunderstandings of the purposes of such exercises occur. What Dee wanted to learn from “the angels” were the secrets of nature and the universe, to pursue scientific knowledge on a higher plane.

So much for Dee’s religious and philosophical approach to such matters. But he was above all a practical man and, as his story unfolds, it will be seen that he visualised many side-lines of crystalomancy which could be turned to account in his Intelligence work. He firmly believed in telepathy and saw this as a practical means of passing on secret information. But in 1581 such ideas were only just germinating in his mind.

Theodore Besterman described John Dee as “a unique figure

in the history of experimental psychology...a pioneer in spiritualism."⁶ His approach to this was only partially through scrying, or the art of crystal-gazing; some of his manuscripts suggest that he also sought revelations through mystic trances and photism. The theory of the natural magicians was that a mystic trance gave a sense of union with God and the universe and that it enabled revelations of importance to be disclosed. As to the photist approach—the hallucination of physical light—there is a hint of this in a diary entry for November, 1582, when Dee described how, while praying in his museum, the window looking to the west "suddenly glowed with a dazzling light, in the midst of which, in all his glory, stood the great angel Uriel." But this somewhat ambiguous and purple passage of narrative is easily misconstrued. Charles Mackay interprets it as a picture of a "smiling angel" giving Dee a "crystal of convex form" and telling him that whenever he wished to hold converse with the beings of another sphere, he had only to gaze intently upon it and they would appear in the crystal and unveil to him "all the secrets of futurity."⁷

But it is perfectly clear from his diaries and his manuscripts that Dee experimented with a wide variety of speculums. Scrying was an ancient, if not always a respected or respectable custom. In the Middle Ages it was thought best to employ a boy, or a virgin girl of tender years for scrying. The idea was that the scryer should concentrate solely on a speculum or crystal ball to make his subconscious mind receptive to thoughts and visions which could not be realised or seen through normal use of the senses. This did not necessarily mean seeing into the future, but it did mean developing in the scryer what is commonly called a sixth sense. That sixth sense, to Dee's way of thinking, involved telepathy and the development of an unknown faculty of perception rather than a purely mystical communion. It is essential to translate his imagery of angels and romantic mysticism into more scientific terms. Ouspensky, the Russian occultist, claimed that Dee "had grasped in the sixteenth century what was scarcely understood in the nineteenth century that telepathic communication was four-dimensional", while Besterman, himself an expert

on crystal-gazing, was insistent that "Dee was a forerunner of extra-sensory perception."⁸

The history of Dee's various speculums and crystal globes is fairly well documented. In one diary note he refers to a crystal "as big as an egg, most bryght, clere and glorious." Elsewhere he calls one of his speculums as "the Shew-Stone", while there is also mention of "the great Christaline Globe", "the stone in the frame "which was given to me of a frende", "the diaphanous globe", and—though Casaubon is an unreliable source—"the first sanctified stone" and "the holy stone". The marginal sketches in Dee's manuscripts depict a globular object and they indicate that the most important of all his speculums was a "crystal globe".

It is quite clear from his writings that he bought some speculums and had others given to him, yet Casaubon persists in the legend that "... he carried with him where ever he went a stone which he called his Angelicall Stone, as brought unto him by an Angell, but by a spirit sure enough."

As to whether any of these crystal globes have survived is largely a matter of surmise. It is claimed that Dee's "shew-stone" is still in the British Museum, but this is by no means certain. Certainly his wax tablets are there, but the origin of the spherical object of some slightly opaque, vitreous substance—possibly a cairngorm stone—is a mystery. This object came to the British Museum with the Cottonian Collection when it was acquired in 1700, but it is not known how it came to be in this Collection. The "shew-stone" has been somewhat glamorised by writers who have tried to depict it as a superb specimen of the scryer's art. "A piece of solid, pink-tinted glass, the size and form of a full-grown orange," wrote G. Ellis in *Notes & Queries* in 1887; "a globe of polished crystal" and "a smoky ball" are examples of how other writers saw it.

But many people throughout the centuries have claimed to have had Dee's crystal in their possession. Horace Walpole, in a letter dated 22 March, 1771 (long after it was supposed to be in the Cottonian Collection), said that Lord Frederick Campbell produced Dee's "black stone" to him, saying he had obtained it

from Lady Betty Germain, who had got it from the Mordaunts, Earls of Peterborough. Francis Dee, a cousin of John, was Bishop of Peterborough, which suggests a possible connection. But Lady Betty Germain is hardly a dependable witness. She was herself reputed to be one of the "nuns of Medmenham", a female member of Sir Francis Dashwood's Hell-Fire Club.

When this speculum to which Walpole referred was put up for sale at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, in 1842, the catalogue gave Walpole's own description of it:

"84. A singularly interesting and curious relic of the superstitions of our ancestors—THE CELEBRATED SPECULUM OF KENNEL COAL, highly polished in a leathern case. It is remarkable for having been used to deceive the mob by the celebrated Dr. Dee, the conjuror, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth."

This description reveals the kind of inaccuracies into which Walpole's prejudices as an historian always led him. His dislike of the Tudors, and especially Tudor historians, was equalled by his detestation of anything that appeared to be mystical or mysterious. He smelt brimstone and demonry wherever he went. This stone was said to be eight inches long and seven and a half inches at its widest part. The last known holder of this relic was Prince Alexis Solkykoff.

Yet Dee's stone—or at least one or other of his stones—was also reputed to have been sold at Sothebys in 1906 and acquired by Mr. Henry Huth. The description of this stone certainly tallies more closely with that given by Dee himself of his favourite "shew-stone"—"oval and rather like a duck's egg."

Scrying may have been carried out by many dubious practitioners throughout the centuries and have lent itself to unscrupulous and superstitious nonsense, but it was also regarded by the philosophers as an honest and serious attempt at telepathic communication. This aspect of scrying has been closely examined by scientists and psychologists in modern times. F. W. H. Myers defining it in 1903, stated that what the crystal helped to effect in the case of telepathy was the exteriorisation of "pictures which are...due to stimuli which come from minds external to the scryer's own."

Even in so materialistically-minded a country as Russia scientists in recent years have paid special attention to the psychic phenomena of telepathy, or what they rather quaintly refer to as "biological radio". Dr. L. L. Vasiliev set up a specially equipped laboratory in which to carry out experimental work in telepathy. In 1959 he published a booklet called *Mysterious Phenomena of the Human Psyche*, which contained a chapter entitled "Mental Radio—does it exist?" Replying to a critic of his work, Vasiliev made this interesting comment: "I critically deal with some questions of parapsychology from the point of view of natural science and materialistic philosophy. Those American parapsychologists who fail to understand that at present scientific questions may be interpreted in this manner only, do harm not only to us, but also to themselves. In fact, the overwhelming majority of American and British scientists will never acknowledge parapsychology as a science as long as parapsychologists tend to interpret their findings in the occultistic and idealistic spirit."¹⁰

Vasiliev was convinced that telepathy works on the basis of some as yet unknown medium of energy transfer, some form of radiations.

The methods of scrying were subjected to scientific scrutiny in the late 'fifties and 'sixties of the last century. F. Hockley, giving evidence on the subject before the Committee of the London Dialectical Society in 1871, asserted that: "The person who has the power of seeing, notices first a kind of mist in the centre of the crystal. . . . A crystal, if properly used, should be dedicated to a spirit."

Thus here at the end of the nineteenth century was almost the identical approach to crystal-gazing which Dee himself had adopted: the dedication to a spirit, the calling up of that "spirit" and the system of question and answer between scryer and "spirit". Hockley gave an example of this in his evidence. Some years previously Hockley had been introduced to a Lieutenant Burton (later Sir Richard Burton) by Lord Stanhope. Burton said he wished to have a crystal "with a spirit attached". Hockley gave him "a black mirror..." and he used that in the same manner as you would a crystal. You invoke the person whom you



William Cecil, the first Baron Burghley, from whom Dee sought a concession to search for treasure trove



Giordano Bruno, who attended Dee's study groups with
Sir Philip Sidney

wish to appear, and the seer looks in and describes all, and puts questions and receives answers. Lieutenant Burton was greatly pleased and went away.

"One day my seeress called him into the mirror. She plainly recognised him, although he was dressed as an Arab and sunburnt, and described what he was doing. He was quarrelling with a party of Bedouins in Arabia and speaking energetically to them in Arabic. An old man at last pulled out his dagger and the Lieutenant his revolver, when up rode a horseman and separated them. A long time afterwards Lieutenant Burton came to me and I told him what she had seen and read the particulars. He assured me it was correct in every particular and attached his name to the account I had written down at the time, to certify that it was true."¹¹

Hockley believed that crystal-gazing was linked with mesmerism.

The idea that "a kind of mist", or dissolving colours appears in the crystal to the scryer is supported by most students of the art. P. Joire says that "if the experiment is to give any results, the scryer will first see the mirror assume a different tinge. It then seems to become turgid, forming red or blue clouds, which whirl like smoke, and finally pictures are formed."¹² Dee himself, citing the experience of Edward Kelley, one of his own scryers, observed that "in the midst of the Stone seemeth to stand a little round thing like a spark of fire, and it increaseth, and seemeth to be as bigge as a Globe of twenty inches diameter, or thereabout."

To set the whole subject of scrying in perspective it is necessary to compare the observations and practices of the ancients, those of the Renaissance and those of the modern crystal-gazers alongside the probings of the scientists. This at least has the merit of removing the subject from the realm of play-acting and fortune-telling and establishing the results of genuine scrying as something worthy of scientific study.

BARNABAS SAUL & EDWARD KELLEY

IN DISCUSSING the practice of scrying with his intimates about this time, Dee was most insistent that he "utterly repudiated" magic and declared vehemently that he "neither studied, nor exercised in it." All he did was to practise crystalomancy as a means by which the spiritual part of him could be awakened and put into communication with the spiritual world. His own definition of scrying was "inducing visions by gazing into a clear depth."

Thus his philosophical mind led him to explore the art of scrying which had been used for centuries by devout men in a search for hidden truths and, from various comments which he made, it may well be that his practical mind was equally drawn to the crystal by his study of optics, then revealing all manner of new horizons in the world of science. Mistakenly, he may have suspected a link between optics and scrying.

There is only that one single instance in which he claimed that he had "sight offered me in chrystallo" and it is evident that he was fully aware of his limitations in scrying when he declared that experience had showed him that "seership tended to be displayed more in the young and immature than in the old and experienced."

So in the autumn of 1581 Dee sought for a scryer among his younger assistants and pupils. He found one in the person of Barnabas Saul, a young lay-preacher who had become an occultist. Saul was first mentioned in Dee's diaries on 9 October, 1581:

"Barnabas Saul, lying in the...hall was strangely trubled by a spirituell creature abowt midnight."

Saul worked for the doctor as a scryer for only two months. Before long news reached Dee that Saul had a criminal background and, though Dee was prepared to overlook this on the grounds that his mediumistic gifts were too valuable to lose, it soon became apparent that Saul was thoroughly untrustworthy. Saul's scrying was done with a globular crystal, described by Dee as "my stone in a frame which was given me of a frende." But Saul's system of scrying rather suggested he was not a genuine crystal-gazer, or at the best that he was a most unconventional one. He always placed the crystal where the rays of the sun could fall on it.

Afterwards, when speaking of Saul, Dee described how the latter "willed" him to "call for the good angel, Anael, to appear in the stone in my own sight." This suggests that in some way—possibly by a form of mesmerism—Saul conveyed to Dee his own sense of vision. The apparition of Anael which Dee appeared to have identified would be the "Answering Angel" who in Talmudic tradition was supposed to make God's secrets known to men. But if Saul "willed" Dee to call for Anael, it must have been Dee's subliminal mind and not any telepathic thoughts of Saul that recorded Anael's message: that many things would be revealed to Dee later, not through Saul, but through another scryer to whom the crystal would be "assigned".

Various writers have asserted that Saul hoodwinked Dee, but the evidence of Dee's own writings suggests that, far from being credulous, he was very critical of all his scryers and increasingly suspicious of Saul. Even at this stage he was testing Saul's reliability and looking for another scryer. His intuitive suspicions about the man seem to have been aroused when Saul introduced his brother, Edward, to the Dee household and sought to find a home for both of them there.

What is not absolutely clear is whether Saul had been sent to spy on Dee by the latter's enemies. Dee himself suspected something of the sort. But the evidence is confusing. The authorities had regarded Saul with suspicion for some time, but whether

their intention was to trap Dee along with Saul is not clear. Early in 1582 Saul was brought before the judges at Westminster Hall on some charge which, though unspecified in the records, appears to have involved sorcery and an inquiry into his occult practices. Dee noted in his diary of 12 February that "Barnabas Saul and his brother Edward went home from Mortlake, Saul, his indictment being by law found insufficient at Westminster Hall."

In fact, Saul had saved himself by denying that he had any occult gifts or psychic powers and seeking to put all the blame on Dee. He slandered his employer by suggesting that Dee had tried to inveigle him into improper practices. So the two parted in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and unpleasantness. Dee recorded that Saul came to see him again on 6 March and confessed that he "neither heard nor saw any spirituall creature any more." On 9 March there is a note written by somebody unknown (the writing is certainly not Dee's) that declared: 'You that rede this underwritten assure yourself that yt is a shameful lye.' Underneath this Dee had written that a Mr. Clerkson and Mr. Talbott had told him at dinner "of a great deal of Barnabas' nowghty dealing towards me, as in telling Mr. Clerkson ill things of me that I shud mak his frende, as that he was wery of me, that I wold so flatter his frende the lerned man that I wold borrow of him. But his frende told me, before my wife, that a spirituall creature told him that Barnabas had censured Mr. Clerkson and me. The injuries which this Barnabas had done me diverse wayes were very great."

The note continued that "Talbott neither studied for any such things, nor shewed himself dishonest in any thinge." The manuscript notes by Dee on this affair are somewhat confused, partly because the comments of other people in *their handwriting* have been interpolated into his own narrative in *his handwriting*, and partly because several notes about Talbott have been erased, but it is not clear whether this was done by Talbott, or Dee.

Dee's final written comment on the affair was: "This is Mr. Talbott, or that lerned man, his own writing in my boke, very unduely as he cam by it."¹ Which seems to suggest that Talbott

had at some time or another been tampering with Dee's notes and adding in his own version of affairs.

Whatever the rights or wrongs of the case of Barnabas Saul, whether he was a knave or an indifferent scryer, there is no doubt that Edward Talbott was far from being a disinterested party in this whole affair. For Talbott was even then seeking to supplant Saul as Dee's scryer. He had told Dee that a spirit had informed him that Saul had been deceiving his master. These tactics proved successful, for within a few days of these happenings Talbott had persuaded Dee to take him on as scryer at a salary of £50 a year with free board and lodging, a comparatively well paid post by Elizabethan standards.

Yet Edward Talbott remains as the most baffling, mysterious and enigmatic character with whom Dee was ever associated. At the same time he is without question one of the most important figures in the Dee story and holds the key to many of the puzzles of the latter half of Dee's life. Once one begins to speculate on Talbott one comes up against a series of contradictions, of miscellaneous and often unconnected facts, much that is posed as fact but which turns out to be merely fiction, and the prejudices of other commentators.

Who was Edward Talbott? Was this his real name? For shortly after he entered Dee's service he adopted the name of Kelley and there is no record as to how or why he made this change. Most probably it was an attempt to start a new life and to bury an unsavoury reputation. His past was masked in a good deal of mystery, but what records there are suggest he was born in Worcester in 1555, which would mean that he was only twenty-seven when he entered Dee's service. Ashmole stated that "Mr. Lilley [the *Almanack* publisher] told me that John Evans informed him that he was acquainted with Kelley's sister in Worcester, that she showed him some of the gold her brother had transmuted and that Kelley was first an apothecary in Worcester."²

This is the most reliable account of his background. From being an apothecary who cherished the idea of finding a formula to manufacture gold, Kelley seems to have turned to crime and

black magic. Possibly some of the allegations against him were untrue, but there is enough to show that he was at least a dabbler in necromancy and those arts of magic which could be labelled "black". Certainly his whole life was devoted to a quest for the "Philosopher's Stone" and the transmutation of base metals into gold. He arrived at Mortlake with a phial containing a red powder and an indecipherable book which he claimed he had found in the ruins at Glastonbury and that in these two articles lay the clue to a recipe for manufacturing gold. In his early days he had been both a forger and a coiner. He had been put in the pillory for forging title deeds and convicted for making counterfeit coins, having had his ears cropped for this offence as a warning to himself and others. The black skull-cap which he invariably wore was intended to hide his shorn-away ears. Though Dee made no reference to the fact, it is also believed that Kelley was at one time secretary to Thomas Allen, another scholar suspected by some of magical practices.

Kelley had travelled widely in England and Wales, possibly keeping on the move in order to avoid being arrested. At the time he first met Dee he had been leading a wandering, vagabond type of life in the course of which he had been indulging in some sinisterly necromantic practices. One story of his adventures is given in the seventeenth century book, *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, by John Weever:

"This diabolical questioning of the dead for the knowledge of future accidents was put into practice by the said Kelley, who, upon a certain night in the park of Walton-le-Dale in the County of Lancaster, with one Paul Waring (his fellow companion in such deeds of darkness) invoked some of the Infernal Regiment, to know certain passages in the life, as also what might be known by the Devil's foresight of the manner and time of death of a noble, young gentleman, as then in wardship. The black ceremonies of the night being ended, Kelley demanded of one of the gentleman's servants what corse was the last buried in Law Church-yard, a church thereunto adjoining, who told him of a poor man who was buried there but the same day. He and the said Waring entreated this foresaid servant to go with them to the grave of the man so lately interred, which he did; and withal did help them to dig up the carcase of the poor caitiff, whom

by their incantations they made him (or rather some evil spirit through his organs) to speak, who delivered strange predictions concerning the same gentleman. I was told this by said serving-man, a secondary actor in that dismal abhorred business; and divers gentlemen and others are now living in Lancashire to whom he hath related this story. And the gentleman himself (whose memory I am bound to honour) told me a little before his death of this conjuration by Kelley as he had it by relation from the said servant and tenant, only some circumstances except, which he thought not fit to come to his master's notice."

Those who have regarded Dee as a black magician have used the evidence about Kelley as proof of Dee's necromantic practices and deceptions. But the answer to this charge is that while much of the evidence against Kelley is undoubtedly incriminating, there is no similar evidence of any kind that can be laid against Dee. Everything points to the fact that the relations between Dee and Kelley were on a much higher plane. Others take the view that Dee was fooled by Kelley, wickedly misused and exploited by him and that from the moment he encountered his new scribe he was a doomed man, slowly lured to his ultimate ruin. Edith Sitwell, using contemporary accounts of Kelley, built up this unflattering picture of the man: "A terrible zombie-like figure, a medium inhabited by an evil spirit, came into this good, old man's [Dee's] life. Dressed always in black...this creature followed him like his shadow."³

Eliphas Levi, the nineteenth century historian of magic, Professor E. M. Butler, the author of *Ritual Magic* and A. R. Waite all took an interest in Kelley and their revelations on the techniques used at this time in "questioning the dead" hardly improve Kelley's reputation. The actual questioning had to be preceded by a blood sacrifice and a fast of fifteen days, with a "single, unsalted repast after sundown". The latter should consist of black bread and blood, or black beans and milky and narcotic herbs. In addition the questioner must "get drunk every five days after sundown on wine in which five heads of poppies and five ounces of pounded hempseed had been strained for five hours, the infusion being strained through a cloth woven by a prostitute."⁴

The ceremony of "questioning the dead" has to take place in a gloomy and depressing atmosphere. A censer must be swung with incense made of "camphor, aloes, ambergris and storax, mixed together with the blood of a goat, a mole and a bat, four nails taken from the coffin of an executed criminal; the head of a black cat which had been nourished on human flesh for five days; a bat drowned in blood and the horns of a goat and the skull of a parricide."⁵

Thus Edith Sitwell portrayed Kelley's antics, claiming that he became Dee's inseparable companion, the thief of his discoveries and that finally he ruined his employer.

Godwin, too, in his *Lives of the Necromancers*, argued that "had Dee gone no further than this, he would undoubtedly have ranked among the profoundest scholars and most eminent geniuses that adorned the reign of the maiden queen, but being cursed with ambition, Dee plunged wholly into magic."

There is at least a case to be made out not only on independent evidence, but on Dee's own subsequent statements that Kelley played tricks on him and behaved very badly on occasions. It would seem that he often dishonestly and cunningly turned his scrying to his own advantage and that his "visions" were sometimes merely the information he wished to foist on Dee. He often warned Dee about his "secret enemies" at Court and on one occasion claimed that both Walsingham and Burghley had said that Dee "wouldst go mad shortlie". But if one sifts the evidence carefully one finds that Kelley's deceits in scrying were mainly related to his obsession with the idea of manufacturing gold and making himself a rich man. This was the one great ambition of Kelley's life and he was always diverting Dee from his more serious studies to carrying out expensive laboratory experiments to achieve this object.

But there is also evidence that Kelley was not always as enthusiastic a scryer as Dee desired. He was, like many scryers, moody and melancholic on occasions, even neurotic, and his own interest in crystal-gazing was apt to evaporate for days and then he would appear to be much more interested in laboratory work than scrying. There were times when he complained that Dee

overworked him, or kept him virtually a prisoner at Mortlake. He declared "that he could not thus lose his tyme, but studie . . . that he dwelleth here as in a prison" (Dee's own record of their conversation).

Kelley also said he was "trubled by devils" and once seemed to put Dee off further attempts at scrying by saying that the spirits which appeared in the shew-stone were devils and that they should have nothing further to do with them. He had, he said, suffered from a tempter who "denies in Christ to be." But there is often contradictory evidence out of Kelley's own mouth about his attitude to the demonic which gives a further glimpse of the instability of his character. While appearing to be genuinely frightened of evil spirits, he was also fascinated by them and frequently could not resist dabbling in those things which Dee thought it wiser to leave alone.

Dee took the view that the purity of his own intentions was sufficient a safeguard against the dangers of occult practices. He did not deny that certain practices were dangerous, but believed that a "Christian approach" to scrying was a sure defence. He was not an easy man to deceive and was certainly not taken in by the tergiversations and trickery of Kelley to the extent that some writers have suggested. In assessing the relationship of Dee and Kelley one has to decide to what extent he played along with Kelley, knowing that his partner was indulging in chicanery, and, if so, why he did this, despite his doubts about the man. A dreamer Dee may have been, but he was always practical and his training in intelligence work enabled him to detect very quickly when he was being tricked. That he did not altogether trust Kelley even in the early days of their association is evident from many entries in Dee's diaries. Shortly after they met he was commenting on Kelley's duplicity, referring to "his abominable lyes" and once noting down the impression he had formed of his scryer: "of this K., I doubt yet."

It is also clear that Dee's mistrust of Kelley went so far that, if he wished to conceal from his scryer any specially secret notes in his diaries, he wrote them in Greek, believing that Kelley was ignorant of that language. Curiously, however, disjointed phrases

in Greek were narrated by Kelley to Dee as coming directly from the angels in some of the visions. Notwithstanding this, Dee still believed that Kelley had no proper knowledge of Greek, or of Greek writing.

There were many curious, sometimes condemnatory, often obscure notes about Kelley which Dee set down in his *Liber Peregrinationis*, mainly written in Greek characters. Dee kept his other diary (mainly of his foreign travels) secret from his partner, probably from the date when he discovered that Kelley had been tampering with his diaries.

Dee, in fact, remained in full control of his faculties when recording the visions and was not only occasionally a sceptical recorder, but would diligently cross-examine the angels through Kelley, sometimes correcting them on their facts, or even their grammar, and certainly rebuking any spirits whom he regarded as "doubtful agents". The vagueness of the angelic pronouncements sometimes irritated Dee; the angels seemed to have all the unpredictability of the female species, whether they were of the male or female sex, and they had a habit of orating at great length in often incomprehensible language on the mysteries of various numbers. For example, the angel Michael dilated thus:

"7 comprehendeth the Secrets of Heaven and earth. 7 knitteth together man's soul and body together (3 in soule and 4 in body). In 7 thou shalt finde the unity. In 7 thou shalt find the Trinity. In 7 thou shalt finde the Sonne and the proportions of the Holy Ghost. O God, O God, O God, Thy Name (O God) be prayed over from thy 7 thrones from the 7 trumpets and from the 7 Angeles. Amen, Amen, Amen!"

Dee was tolerant to the point of excusing the imperfections of the angelic dialogue, but he was slightly irritated by the fact that when the angels talked in mathematical terms—as they often did—they made their meaning even more obscure by using technical words and phrases in a totally different sense from that normally used in the class-room. Not only did they decline to explain this, but they were apt to switch from the serious to the frivolous when questioned too closely.

But question them Dee did. Perhaps he was at this time still

testing his scryer as much as he was testing the angels. When they made errors in their Latin speech, he immediately corrected them, but seemed content with their reply that Kelley must have pronounced their words wrongly. He also quoted the works of reference in his library to the angels, and put to them some of the statements of Agrippa.

Kelley, whatever his past background, was not an unattractive personality, however unprepossessing he may have been as a figure. He possessed a considerable amount of charm, upon which even Burghley remarked favourably. Possibly it was a mesmeric charm, but all contemporary accounts of the man suggest personal magnetism and an ingenious brain. Whatever in the past he may have carried out in necromantic practices, to Dee in these early days he revealed only an intense interest in natural magic, a distaste and revulsion from demonic magic and a desire—to quote his own statement to Dee—“to see or show something in spiritual practice.”

Kelley had studied Agrippa's occult philosophy and, though Dee was primarily interested in numerology as real artificial magic, he was also persuaded by Kelley to interest himself in numerology in connection with the Hebrew names of angels and spirits in the practical Cabbala. Dee differed from most of the other Cabbalists in that he paid more attention to Agrippa's instructions in securing these names and by using them to seek a personal revelation from God. Kelley's scrying was therefore always being tested against Dee's personal conception of what he considered to be genuine revelations. Not surprisingly, Kelley was often found to be an inadequate scryer by Dee's own standards. But, on other occasions, Dee seems to have been sufficiently impressed to urge him on to greater efforts.

As far as one can gather Dee held fairly clear views of the nature of the “angels” appearing in visions. They were to him intelligent, but passionless beings, telepathically attuned to a knowledge of the past and the future. On the subject of demons he was both vague and evasive, probably rejecting the conventional Hermetical view that they lived in the clouds below the moon, but accepting that they were “influences” whose purpose

was to confuse, obscure the truth and mislead by introducing irrelevant and chaotic visions. He went all the way, or almost all the way, with the natural magicians on the subject of angels, but had rather a more modern and psychological approach to the demonic.

Thus one gets a picture of Kelley kneeling before Dee's shew-stone, praying that "sight might be given him therein", while Dee, kneeling a little apart from Kelley, invoked "the help of God and his good creatures for the furtherance of action". This was the first seance in which the two men participated which Dee recorded and he noted with obvious excitement and joy that before the praying had lasted sixteen minutes, Uriel, the Spirit of Light, had appeared in the stone.

Dee may have had doubts about Kelley, he may even have known something of his past, but he was impressed by Kelley's erudition, if occasionally critical of it, and erudite scryers were not easily come by. It should be stressed that Dee needed a scryer who was both intelligent and reasonably well educated. Mr. C. A. Burland, an authority on the history of natural magic, who has spent many years' research into the links between the magical arts and neo-Platonism, regards Kelley as worthy of serious study and makes the point that "Kelley, who is also much cursed, certainly had a much better philosophical background than is generally known."⁶

But if Dee had doubts about Kelley even in the early days, Jane Dee was quite certain in her mind that the coming of Kelley was disastrous to the family. She had premonitions from the very beginning that he would bring nothing but misery and sensed that there was something thoroughly untrustworthy about the man. After the experience of Barnabas Saul, who could blame her. She warned her husband that in dealing with Kelley he was endangering his reputation. Dee was disturbed by his wife's fears and deeply regretted them; he assured her he would be careful, but insisted that Kelley's services were essential to his studies. It was not surprising that Jane Dee showed some resentment to this newcomer who usurped the house and was primarily responsible for her husband withdrawing from his family for long periods

and shutting himself up in a small inner room, once a bed-chamber, where he meditated and waited for Kelley to reveal his visions.

Jane's mistrust of Kelley must have resulted in many arguments which disturbed the family peace. On 6 May, 1582, Dee wrote in his diary that "Jane is in a mervelous rage at 8 ocloke at night...chided me terribly for... [here the writing has been erased by somebody, possibly even by Kelley]...quietened down by Mr. Clerkson." One cannot be sure that this row was about Kelley, but the fact that a friend of Kelley's, Mr. Clerkson, was the would-be mediator, indicates that it could well have been so.

Devious and complicated a character that he was, Kelley undoubtedly had some telepathic gifts and a certain talent as a prophet, but even this may have been exaggerated and some of the more astute observations, or forecasts of Dee have been credited by mistake to Kelley.

What may also have attracted Dee to Kelley was the latter's claim to have found in the mythical Vale of Avalon near Glastonbury an alchemical manuscript of priceless value and to have located there some of the famous powder of projection" which alchemists in the past had used. It is not clear whether this manuscript was found in Wales or Glastonbury, but it seemed to refer to ten places in England where treasure was supposed to be hidden. There is a curious drawing of the various locations in Dee's diary and the comment: "After coming from the Court I thought I would try to discover the ciphers of the Paper E.K. brought me as willed to do, found at Huet's Cross, with a book of magic and alchemy."

But Dee's interest in Glastonbury had been aroused for a different reason. He was fascinated by what he regarded as the discovery of Merlin's secret in the unusual arrangement of the prehistoric earthworks in the Glastonbury area and he had diagnosed that these objects when carefully mapped represented the signs of the Zodiac and the stars. He had himself made a map of the district on which he had noted that "the starres which agree with their reproductions on the ground do lye onlie on the celestial path of the Sonne, moon and planets, with the notable

exception of Orion and Hercules....all the greater starres of Sagittarius fall in the hinde quarters of the horse, while Altair, Tarazed and Alschain from Aquilla do fall on its cheste...thus is astrologie and astronomie carefullie and exactley married and measured in a scientific reconstruction of the heavens which shews that the ancients understode all which today the lerned know to be factes."

It was about this time that Kelley began his attempts to interest Dee in the manufacture of gold and to revive his own interest in seeking buried treasure. But whereas Kelley's approach to the manufacture of gold was largely necromantic, Kelley also believed that the answer to the discovery of what he insisted on calling the "Philosopher's Stone" lay in the Glastonbury area. Eventually he persuaded Dee to accompany him on an expedition to this district. Here in the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey Kelley claimed to have found a vase containing a small quantity of the authentic elixir of life, which, he said, could enable them to convert base metals into gold.

In A. E. Waite's book, *The Alchemical Writings of Edward Kelley*, there is a statement that "Dr. Dee, who knew nothing of alchemy, remained in comparative retirement." But, somewhat contradictorily, Waite adds, "but he was a co-worker with Kelley in the transmutation of metals." Dee himself provided this clue to his activities in manufacturing gold: "The unalterable body ☉ is dissolved in a small quantity of liquid ☿ because it is by Mercury that the impurities are purged away from the matter in which ☉ is to be found. A few drops of this water will give lead the appearance of gold."

No doubt Kelley influenced Dee to some extent in his approach to transmutation and possibly where Dee was better versed in scientific theory and chemistry, Kelley was more practical in the application of scientific knowledge. But even this is a debatable point as in his writings Kelley claimed a good deal of the credit for work undoubtedly done by Dee. Three years later Dee recorded in his comments on their joint alchemical investigations that at this date "and tyll which tyme I was chief governor of our philosophical proceedings."

There is also evidence that both men sought the aid of the spirits in seeking buried treasure, something Dee had never countenanced previously. One of the spirits, Prince Bornogo, had declared that "the bowels of the earth are at my opening." Dee noted that he requested the spirit "to helpe me with some portion of treasures hid, to pay my debts withall and to buy things necessary." Necessity in this instance must have driven him to such a request.

What assistance the spirits gave is not always clear. On an early occasion Dee and Kelley were rebuked for making such requests. But on 8 May, 1582, after Kelley had returned with samples of earth "for testing" from eleven different parts of the country, Dee gave thanks to the Angels for help received "for the Myne Royall". There was no indication of the nature of the mine, but presumably Kelley had been obtaining mineral samples. Another obscure marginal note about this period refers to "my part in Devonshire mines". On treasure-hunting, curiously enough, Dee seems to have had more success overseas, and a symbolic outline, which could have represented a divining-rod, is set against another note to the effect that "Danish treasures [were] taken out of the earth."

Dee was at this time of his meeting with Kelley engaged in a lengthy and detailed treatise on the need for reforming the calendar. Only a year before he had presented to the Queen two large rolls containing a "hydrographical and geographical description of countries" to which the Queen could make legitimate claim. Now Elizabeth became interested in his ideas on calendar reform as well as his proposals for simpler and more effective means of propagating the Gospel in America.

In 1582 he was commissioned by the Queen to revise the calendar in use in England, aiming to bring it in line with continental changes. He headed his tract "A playne discourse and humble advise for our gratious Queene Elizabeth, her most Excellent Majestie to peruse and consider, as concerning the needful reformation of the vulgar Kalendar for the civile yeres and daies accompting or verifying, according to the tyme truely

spent." It was inscribed to "the Right Honourable and my singular good Lorde, the Lorde Burghley, Lorde Threasorer of England." In his preface to his work Dee wrote.

*"I shew the thing and reason why;
At large, in brief, in midell wise,
I humbly give a playne Advise
For word of time, the Tyme Untrew.
If I have myst, command anew
Your honour may: so shall you see
That love of truth, doth governe mee."*

In 1514 Pope Leo X had attempted a reform of the calendar, assisted by Copernicus, but it was not until 1581 that Pope Gregory XIII entrusted the task of creating a new calendar to a Jesuit priest, Christopher Schlüssel, better known by his Latinised name of Clavius. In 1581 the true equinox fell on 11 March, or ten days before the equinox of the calendar. To rectify this error, the date of 15 October, 1582, the year in which the reformed calendar was introduced, was made to follow 4 October, the intervening days being omitted.

Dee's work on the revision of the calendar continued in 1583. He took much of his data from Copernicus and applied himself scientifically to the task rather than allowing ecclesiastical considerations to be given undue weight. He omitted eleven days from the old calendar (then $365\frac{1}{4}$ days) and pointed out that this would be more accurate than the omission of ten days as proposed by Pope Gregory. A committee of mathematicians was appointed to consider Dee's proposals, comprising Digges, Saville and Chancellor. They approved Dee's scheme for omitting eleven rather than ten days, though for the sake of uniformity they recommended complying with the continental calendar. This suggested compromise displeased Dee who considered that mathematically and scientifically his proposals were nearer to exactitude. The calendar work, which was never printed in its entirety, created a sensation at the time and was the subject of much controversy among politicians and churchmen. The memorial on the subject, which was presented to the Privy Council, was, however, printed by Hearne and others. It is not generally known



Sir Edward Kelley, Dee's scribe and collaborator in the "Angelic Conversations"



Rudolph II, Holy Roman Emperor, banished Dee from his court; *below*, the Street of the Alchemists, where Dee lived during his sojourn in Prague



that the original manuscript of the actual treatise on the correction of the calendar is still preserved in Ashmole's library.

Walsingham and Burghley approved Dee's plans and would have gone ahead with them, but, though never formally rejected, the scheme was not implemented because of opposition from the Bishops. Some of them argued illogically that it showed the influence of Papism. Others were opposed to the change on the grounds that it might cause offence to the Reformed Churches on the continent. Dee counter-attacked with the argument that the changed calendar would be of the utmost assistance to those engaged in commerce with continental countries. But the bishops remained adamant; they were as hostile to any adoption of continental methods as were the British up to ten years ago in considering a change to the decimal system.

Dee, however, used his own calendar for his own letters and notes, double-dating them in almost every case. When he had an idea in which he believed, he was an obstinate man and would not easily be diverted from his aims. He never gave up campaigning for a change in the calendar and as late as 1591 issued an ordinance which proved the errors of the old calendar. But it was not until 1752 that Britain adopted the Dee plan and the eleven days between 2 and 14 September were omitted.

There are notes by Dee at this time of various mysterious trips to South Mimms, Oxford, *Avalon* (by which he must mean the Glastonbury area), to "Greenwich for neues of 30" and "to Whitehall about Monsieur his latest jorney". There is no explanation for the visits to South Mimms and Oxford, though doubtless in the latter place he was in search of books, and at Glastonbury he would be exploring the zodiacal signs of the sea moors of Somerset. But the last two references were undoubtedly to intelligence work. "To Whitehall about Monsieur" must refer to inquiries concerning the Duc d'Anjou, who was again paying secret visits to the Queen. There was certainly also some discussion between the Queen herself and Dee on this subject, for he noted on 11 February, 1583, "Her Majestie axed me obscurely of Monsieur's state. I said he was dead-alive". This last phrase in the sentence was written in Greek characters.

As to the figure "30" there is good reason for believing that this was a code name for Mary, Queen of Scots' son, James. Randolph wrote several letters to Walsingham, partly in cipher, which are imperfectly reproduced in Boyd's Scottish Calendar. From them emerges, however, a clear numerical code for various people. On 23 February, 1581, Randolph wrote: "I have spoken with 20 since I cam that I am sure neither trusteth me, nor I him." The figure "20" referred to Hunsdon and by the context of the messages it is equally clear that "10" meant Morton and "30" meant James Stuart.⁸

As James was heir to the throne of Scotland—and to that of England, too, if Elizabeth had no heir—Elizabeth was not anxious that he should marry. She seems to have believed that marriage culminating in a son would in some way threaten her own security, not an unreasonable supposition in view of the machinations of the age. She is said to have interfered with at least one of his plans to marry. He tried to become betrothed to a daughter of the Danish King, but Elizabeth's agents are said to have put an end to this. One of Dee's continental missions at the time the marriage was being arranged was to Bavaria and it may be only coincidence, but shortly afterwards the Princess was hastily married to the Duke of Bavaria.

James then carried on negotiations for his marriage to another princess who set sail to meet him, but storms forced her ship off course and she was forced to seek a harbour in Norway. Arkon Daraul in *Witches and Sorcerers* writes that "there may, or may not have been rumours that London was using witchcraft to impede the nuptials. Perhaps the notorious Dr. John Dee, as a close friend of the Queen, had a hand in things. Be that as it may, the gallant James decided to sail in person to claim his bride. He arrived safely, consummated his marriage and was invited by his father-in-law to pass the winter in Copenhagen. Setting sail again in the spring for Scotland, James encountered such extraordinary and contrary winds that they were almost unaccountable. It was even said that one supernatural wind blew his ship in a different direction from those of the rest of the fleet."⁹

Poor Dee! he was always being blamed for anything that smacked of the supernatural. Certainly James was dogged in his early life by reported rumours of attempted witchcraft against his person, which may have been one reason for his life-long obsession against the cult. Not long after his return to Edinburgh on this occasion a serving maid, Geillis Duncan, became suspected of witchcraft because of the remarkable cures which she seemed able to effect. Under questioning she implicated certain other people one of whom, Agnes Sampson, admitted that she had been involved in a plot against James. Agnes told how she had tried to obtain a piece of James' clothing, claiming that had she been able to do this she could have bewitched him by putting a spell on it. James became so interested in this case that he undertook personally to question Agnes. He seems to have been unimpressed by her claims to put a spell on him, but was greatly shaken when she recounted to him the exact words which had passed between him and his wife on their wedding night.¹⁰

There are few glimpses in Dee's diaries of the life of his growing family, though on one occasion he noted that Arthur, his son, and Mary Herbert, "they being but three yere old the eldest, did make as it wer a shew of childish marriage, of calling ech other husband and wife."

That he was still indulging in telepathy in a manner which he considered consistent with Christian beliefs is shown by the following note: "Robert Gardener declared unto me hora 4½ a certeyn great philosophicall secret, as he termed it, which was solemnly done, and with common prayer."

There was pressure on him at this time for him to resign his living at Upton, for he recorded that "Mr. Eton of London cam with his son-in-law, Mr. Edward Bragden, as concerning Upton parsonage, to have me resign or let it unto his said son-in-law, whom I promised to let understand whenever myself wold consent to forego it."

There is an interesting note in the diary for 19 June, 1582, to the effect that Barnabas Saul came to see him and he "chided him for his untrue reportes." But he did not disclose the reasons for Saul's visit.

THE "ANGELIC CONVERSATIONS"

THROUGHOUT THE latter part of 1582 and the early part of 1583 Dee was continually being consulted on plans for an expedition to find a North-west Passage for China. Sir George Peckham visited him in July on the subject of laying claim in the Queen's name to all lands in the extreme North-west of the American continent. Dee had urged that these should be secured so that bases could be set up there for British ships.

Dee seems to have been hopeful of some reward from Peckham, for he noted that "he promised me of his gift... of the new conquest, and thought to get so moche of Mr. Gerarde's gift to be sent me with seale within a few days." But there was no record of his having received anything.

John Leonard Haller, his trusted agent from Worms, again came to see him to "declare his readiness to go toward Quinsay [North China]." But there was a hint in this note of 10 September, 1582, that Dee was using Haller for espionage as well. Haller had intimated that he "wold go and lye at Venys [Venice] all this winter and from thens to Constantinople." Dee was eager to have "all possible neues of mouvement by shippes and envoys obteynable in Venys for yt is well kowne that Spanysh affaires are better knowne in that city than elsewhere." So, to encourage his friend, Dee requested "Mr. Charles Sted to help him to mak his mony over to Paris and Nuremberg and to help him with the Sercher of Rye to pass his horse and to help him with Mr. Osborn, the Alderman, with his letters to Constantinople." A

day later he was writing to one Dugenes de Dionigiis "to Venys by Mr. Haller".

In seeking Intelligence from Venice Dee was showing considerable foresight, for it was not until three years later that Walsingham organised similar spy networks on his own accord. It was Dee who urged on him the importance of Italy generally and Venice in particular as a listening-post for obtaining Spanish secrets. Dee used Central Europeans and Flemings as agents, whereas Walsingham tended to rely more on Italians. Dee also took advantage of the fact that many young Englishmen of good families went to Italy to complete their education and he used his own pupils as spies. There was a close connection between Spain and Italy both politically and economically and it was from his Neapolitan possessions that Philip of Spain obtained a considerable portion of his naval resources. Similarly, through both Venice and Milan he sent reinforcements to the Low Countries.

During November Dee was still having a stream of callers from all parts of Europe at Mortlake. They were all noted down, but with few comments against their names. There were in this month "a stranger from Trushen, born at Regius Mons, his name is Martinus Faber", Mr. Clement, a seamaster, David Ingram, of Barking, a friend of Sir George Peckham, and a Mr. Newbury, "who had byn at Cambaya in Inde".

It was not until 23 January, 1583, that the talks on the North-west Passage began in real earnest. Then Dee noted with apparent satisfaction: "Mr. Secretary Walsingham cam to my howse where by good luck he founde Mr. Awdrian Gilbert and so talke was begonne on the North-West Straights discoverie." The following day talks were continued with Dee, Adrian Gilbert, Walsingham and John Davis [who had been nominated to lead the expedition] "at Mr. Beale, his howse, where only we four were present and we made Mr. Secretarie privie of the North-west Passage and all charts and rutters were agreed uppon in generall."

It was at this time that Richard Harvey recorded that the Queen had "vouchsafed the title of her philosopher to John Dee."

So at this date at least his association with first Saul and then Kelley seems to have done him no harm at Court.

While agreeing to help with the plan for John Davis's bid to find the North-west Passage, which was delayed until two years later, Dee seems already to have had some doubts about the success of this project, for he was again beginning to veer in favour of the discovery of a North-east Passage to China. In February of 1583 he was having discussion on this very subject with a Mr. Lee, who had been in Moscow, and who had brought him reports from Russian seamen on the prospects for a North-east Passage. Dee's links with Russia appear to have been partly through the Queen, who at one time conducted a lengthy correspondence with that sinister Czar of Russia, Ivan the Terrible (1530-84). Indeed, in 1553 Ivan had concluded a commercial treaty with Elizabeth and she had actually sent one of her own physicians, Robert Jacoby, to attend him. Jacoby was a close friend of Dee and had given him information on the north-east lands, including Siberia, which Ivan had annexed.¹

A company was formed by Dee, Adrian Gilbert and Davis for the North-West Passage expedition and also for colonisation of America. These three men called themselves "The Colleagues of the Fellowship of the New Navigations Atlantick and Septentrional for the Discoverie of the North-West Passage." At this time Dee had Walsingham's full backing and the charts for Davis's voyage were prepared by Dee in Walsingham's own study.

A grant for the expedition was made, but never executed and Dee appears to have been disgusted by this. It would seem from some documents that he was promised the greater part of Canada under the original proposals. However, later in the year Dee had to go to the continent and he was replaced by Walter Raleigh in the company. There is little doubt that he lost financially through all these dealings. It was not until 1584 that Adrian Gilbert, through Walsingham's influence, received a patent from the Queen which conferred upon him ample rights not only for the discovery of a passage by the "North-west and North-east or Northward to the East", but also to trade and settle in any country he encountered on the way. Then in 1585 John Davis

was given two small ships, the *Sunshine*, of fifty tons, with a crew of seventeen seamen, four musicians and a boy, and the *Moonshine* of thirty-five tons. It was a bold adventure, but the expedition was too small and ill-equipped to sail through the ice-bound seas. Rounding the point, afterwards named by Davis as Cape Farewell, they sailed by the western coast of Greenland to find the passage to China. They entered the broad channel, named after the leader as Davis Strait, but were eventually driven back by fogs and adverse winds. Davis was convinced he had found an open passage to Cathay.

In 1586 Davis sailed out again, this time with four ships, but again he failed. Undeterred, Davis, surely one of the most redoubtable discoverers in history, set out for a third time and in June, 1587, reached the coast of Greenland and arrived at the most northerly point any mariner had yet touched. Davis had discovered 732 miles of coast from Cape Farewell to what became known as Sanderson's Hope, but he had still not found the Passage. Unpopular in London he might have been for his three successive failures, but he had enabled the Arctic territories to be properly charted for the first time and . . .

*. . . Davis three times forth for the
North-west made,
Still striving by that course t'enrich the
English trade;
And as he deserved, to his eternal fame,
There by a mighty sea, immortalised his name.*

* * *

At this time Dee was recording his "angelic conferences" in his "Spirituell Diary", some of which were reproduced by Casaubon in 1659. He had been engaged in a limited amount of spiritualistic speculation before he met Saul and Kelley, but he had never allowed this to interfere with his public work. But disappointment that so many of his proposals—the reform of the Calendar, his naval treatise and his colonisation plans—had not been implemented may have led him to devote more of his time to the spiritual side of things in 1582 and afterwards.

There is also evidence that Dee regarded the year 1582 and the years 1582-88 as of special significance. His studies both of astronomy and history, as well as his astrological researches, had led him to believe this. Celestial changes, he had argued, had frequently in history preceded swift progress in the human race and the rise of new religions. And between 1572 and 1581 there had been a remarkable number of celestial changes. There was the new star of 1572, followed by the Great Comet of 1577 and two other comets which followed shortly afterwards. According to Dee, a "world cycle" of 670 years had been completed in 1582. Such portents may have made him more eager to seek spiritual enlightenment on the subject.

He did not keep his spiritualist practices completely secret and he insisted that they were simply a logical development of his philosophical studies, claiming that the mysteries of spiritualism were regarded as a legitimate branch of natural philosophy. The idea that God had deliberately withheld from the ordinary man access to certain wisdom, but that it could be acquired by a highly educated person, attuned to a higher plane of existence appealed as much to his vanity as to his curiosity. With advancing years this idea gradually became more important to him and, as he told Edward Kelley, he had "long been desirous to have help in philosophicall studies through the company and information of the Angells of God".

The full extent of records of these "angelic conversations" cannot for certain be known. A great many of them can be studied in the original in the Ashmolean and British Museums; some exist in collections on the continent and in Russia. Only a sample of the "conversations" was published by Meric Casaubon in the seventeenth century and he might well have changed his views on them if he had seen all the papers and compared them with Dee's diary jottings as a counter-balance to the visionary descriptions. The papers which Casaubon acquired had been found in the secret drawer of a piece of furniture which had once belonged to Dee and had come into the possession of a Lombard Street confectioner. Alas, the shop-keeper only

bothered to keep some of the papers. Even the more orthodox diaries of Dee are far from being intact. They are mainly scraps of paper in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford and it cannot be said that anything approaching a good job has been made of editing and interpreting them. James Orchard Halliwell edited them for the Camden Society in 1842 and a very inadequate and often inaccurate job he made of it. By far the best job of editing was undertaken by John Eglinton Bailey who covered the Manchester period of Dee's life in his diaries from 1595-1601.

Casaubon intended his book on the "angelic conversations" to fulfil a very different purpose from that of Dee. Far from acknowledging their religious intent, he sought to prove that Dee was a deluded person, "a confederate of the crop-eared wizard", who had been imposed on by others. Yet even Casaubon did not question Dee's good faith. What he meant his book to be was not only an antidote to atheism, but a terrible warning against religious delusions, misused enthusiasms and "uncontrolled indulgence in private effusions of prayer, productive of overconfidence in God's special grace and belief in a privileged extension of His concern towards the intercessor." He ignored completely the scientific and philosophical approach of Dee to these questions and regarded the fact that each seance was preceded by and concluded with a prayer as further evidence of self-delusion.

Yet would a deluded man have recorded, as did Dee, his failures and noted and admitted his limitations? It cannot be said that these are the characteristics of a man suffering from delusions. Dee himself said not once, but many times, no doubt with regret; "You know I cannot see nor scry." The truth is that though Dee was the imperious and unwearying force behind these experiments, driving Kelley on towards greater efforts, Kelley was the man who had the visions, while Dee was simply the questioner, recorder and interpreter of what was seen and heard.

As we have already seen his whole approach to this self-imposed task was singularly free from deluded fanaticism. He would cross-examine, check angelic statements against works in

his own library, rebuke, repudiate what he felt was irrelevant or false and play very much the role of a probing advocate.

Enthusiastic he certainly was. He once told the angels: "I have byn long at this tyme in my dealing with you. I trust I do not offend you therewith. But for my parte I could finde in my heart to contynue whole dais and nights in this manner of doing; even tyll my body shold be ready to sink down for weariness before I wold give over."

On the other hand he could deal with any recalcitrant spirit in the manner of a stern judge. When a somewhat dubious spirit appeared in the disguise of a preacher and sneeringly said the angels would "never enter the stone", though claiming himself to be a good angel, Dee replied thus:

"*Ergo*, thou art a lyar for thou saydst no good angell would or might come into this stone. Thus will God be glorified against wicked Satan and his ministers."

Kelley commented that this spirit seemed to be "a very foolish devil".

Dee immediately responded by saying "*Mendacem oportet esse momorem*." Or, in modern parlance, "Get the hell out of it."

John Aubrey wrote of Dee as he was in the early days of his association with Kelley: "He had a very fair, cleare, rosie complexion, a long beard as white as milke. He was tall and slender, a very handsome man. . . he wore a gowne like an artist's gowne, with hanging sleeves and a slitt; a mighty good man he was."

At least one student of the diaries, Theodore Besterman, a modern and scientific authority on scrying, thought there was little doubt that most of the visions recorded in the diaries were genuine. "For there is much in them," he wrote, "the records, that is, of things actually seen, not the interpretations of Dee and Kelley—that is in accord with modern experience. In no case, however, can the absolute honesty of Dee be doubted and the absurd reflections, after the fashion set by Butler. . . which have been made on his integrity, and even on his sanity, are quite undeserved."²

Butler in *Hudibras* wrote:

*Kelley did all his feats upon
The Devil's looking-glass, a Stone,
Where, playing with him at Bo-Peep,
He solv'd all problems ne'er so deep.*

Kelley insisted that scrying demanded the setting up of a "table of practice" on which the crystal must be set. Kelley himself obtained this table, which was described as being made of "sweet wood and about two cubits high." It would thus be about three feet in height and it was inscribed with various characters of a cabbalistic nature and a cruciform sign. Wax tablets were placed under the legs of the table and a larger tablet was used as a pedestal on top of which was placed a cloth of red silk and on this the crystal was set down. The wax tablets, three of which are still in the British Museum, were mystic seals; on the upper sides were interlaced triangles which represented the Pentacle of Solomon, together with the seven hidden names of God and the names of certain angels and spirits.

No doubt certain of the seances were used in connection with horoscope casting. They seem to have been simple and devoid of any of those elaborate, sacrificial rituals which are so marked a feature of the black magicians. From the accounts Dee gave of them they reveal nothing that cannot be explained scientifically by those who have analysed the arts of scrying. There are various references by Dee to "the curtain of the Stone", but this can be interpreted as the "mist" or peculiar clouding of the crystal which precedes each vision and follows its disappearance. In short, this was a psychic phenomenon in the crystal itself.

Kelley would sit before the crystal and describe whatever spirits he saw, what they were doing and what they said to him. Dee would silently record all Kelley told him in his book, sometimes pausing to request Kelley to address some specific question to a spirit. Occasionally the spirits would step out of the crystal and then Kelley would relate their movements in the room. Success crowned their efforts surprisingly soon after they started scrying together. Kelley reported that he had seen Uriel, the Spirit of Light, who had told him that there were forty-nine good

angels who would all answer in the crystal when summoned. In his writing up of the "conversations" Dee put the initials "E.K." for Edward Kelley and the Greek for himself.

One figure appears over and over again in these "angelic conversations", a spirit-child, half-angel and half-elfin, first described by Dee as "a Spirituall Creature, like a pretty girle of 7 or 9 yeares of age, attired on her head, with her hair rowled up before, and hanging down very long behind, with a gown of Sey ...changeable green and red, and with a train she seemed to play up and down...and seemed to go in and out behind my bokes."

She said her name was Madimi. She appeared for seven years to Kelley and Dee and during this period grew in stature and maturity, having reached womanhood when the seances ended with the departure of Kelley. She claimed to be an "Angelic Intelligencer" and had the gift of speaking in several languages and a remarkably retentive memory.

There were other spirit visitors to the seances, which Dee noted down in his *Libri Mysteriorum*, which is now in the Sloane MSS. There was a peasant who dressed in red and a woman named Galvah who talked in Greek, and on one occasion fifteen spirits appeared simultaneously.

Meric Casaubon's account, taken from Dee's notes, on the first appearance of Madimi tells how she left the crystal and flitted between Dee and Kelley, swinging her train around her like a dancer. Dee put the questions to Kelley who repeated them to Madimi and the conversation went as follows:

Dee: Whose maiden are you?

Madimi: Whose man are you?

Dee: I am the servant of God both by my bound duty and also (I hope) by his Adoption.

A voyce: You shall be beaten if you tell.

Madimi: Am I not a fine Maiden? Give me leave to play in your howse, my Mother told me she would come and dwell here.

Dee (recording): She went up and down with most livelie gestures of a young girle, playing by herselfe, and diverse times

another spake to her from the corner of my study by a great Perspective-glasse, but none was seen beside her selfe.

Madimi: Shall I? I will.

Dee (recording): Now she seemed to answer one in the foresaid Corner of the Study.

Madimi (speaking to one in the foresaid Corner): I pray you let me tarry a little.

Dee: Tell who who you are?

Madimi: I pray you, let me play with you a little, and I will tell you who I am.

Dee: In the name of Jesus then tell me.

Madimi: I rejoyce in the name of Jesus and I am a poor little Maiden, Madimi. I am the last but one of my Mother's children. I have little Baby-Children at home.

Dee: Where is your home?

Madimi: I dare not tell you where I dwell, I shall be beaten.

Dee: You shall not be beaten for telling the truth to them that love the truth, to the eternal truth all creatures must be obedient.

Madimi: I warrant you I will be obedient. My sisters say they must all come and dwell with you.

Dee: I desire that they who love God should dwell with me, and I with them.

Madami: I love you now you talke of God.

Dee: Your eldest sister her name is Eseméli.

Madimi: My sister is not so short as you mak her.

Dee: O, I cry you mercy, she is to be pronounced Eseméli.

Kelley: She smileth. One calls her saying, 'Come away Maiden.'

Madami: I will read over my Gentlewoemen first. My Master Dee will teach me, if I say amisse.

Dee: Read over your Gentlewoemen as it pleaseth you.

Madimi: I have Gentlemen and Gentlewoemen. Look you here.

Kelley: She bringeth a little boke out of her pocket. She pointeth to a Picture in the boke.

Madimi: Is not this a pretty man?

Dee: What is his name?

Madimi: My...saith his name is Edward. Look you, he hath a Crowne uppon his head, my Mother saith, that this man was Duke of York.

Kelley: She looketh uppon a Picture in the boke with Coronet in his hand and Crowne uppon his head. The man in question was Edward VI of England.

This was a typical example of some of the "angelic conversations". It is fairly clear that, generally speaking, only Kelley actually saw the spirits and that the foregoing descriptions were given by Kelley and transcribed by Dee at the time. On the other hand a few of the descriptions might be interpreted as meaning that on isolated occasions Dee had visions, too. One description, when Dee is recording, and when he does not positively attribute the narrative to Kelley, concerns Madimi darting around the study:

"The Spirituall Creature...seemed to play up and down and seemed to go in and out of my bokes lying in heaps, and as she should ever go between them, the bokes seemed to give place sufficiently, dividing one heap from the other, while she passed between them."

Madimi turned over more pages of the book and identified other royal persons, telling Kelley that her sister had torn out two leaves and that these she would bring back on her next visit.

Perhaps the vision was broken by the voice of Jane Dee calling her husband for a meal. Whatever happened it would seem that a domestic call interrupted the seance for Dee concluded his narrative with the comment that "we were earnestly called for to supper by my folks."³

Dee and Kelley preceded their scrying by a system of "Calls" or invocations. These suggest the influence of Agrippa, Campanella, Bruno and Trithemius, but the "Calls" also showed considerable ingenuity and originality on the part of Kelley, Dee or both men, even allowing for the fact that they were supposed to be "dictated" by occult means. It is generally accepted that the nineteen "Keys" or "Calls" were supplied by Kelley to Dee, but I think that there is a considerable element of doubt here.

To begin with, Kelley claimed that the "Calls" were dictated to him in the angels' own language, called Enochian. But the basis at least of the idea underlying the "Calls" is to be found in the *Hieroglyphic Monad* and with Dee's explanation of years before of the "Aethyrs...whose dominion extendeth in ever-widening circles without and beyond the Watch Towers of the Universe." This was the sphere of the spirits, the Watch Towers being cubes of infinite magnitude inside which were the names of the angels inhabiting them.

Kelley's claim was that he had been told the names of all thirty of the Aethyrs and the angels who governed them. But, as though this in itself was not obscure and difficult enough, not to mention the language of Enochian, in which they were transmitted, the "Calls" had to be dictated backwards. One explanation of this, it has been suggested, is that the names when appearing in the crystal were reflected upside down and backwards. It is admittedly unclear whether on some occasions Kelley actually heard, or merely saw the writing of them in the crystal.

The system by which the "Calls" were obtained and worked out was complicated in the extreme and even to quote some of the main details of the operation is to risk confusing the most erudite scholar of any age. Briefly, it involved Kelley seating himself in front of the crystal, noting the appearance of the angel Gabriel with a wand and a board containing letters and figures. Kelley would then tell Dee to which figures or letters Gabriel pointed and Dee, who had a copy of these figures and letters in front of him, would write down the sign in the square indicated. These tables, when worked out, were known as *Liber Logaeth*.

Presumably the "Calls" were intended to be worked backwards, though even this is not absolutely clear. But the last "Call", the nineteenth, was the most important and presumably should come first, as this was the one which invoked the Thirty Aethyrs.

Casaubon dismisses Enochian in the following scathing terms: "By what I have seen it doth appear to me a very superstitious, foolish, fabulous writing, or to conclude all in one word, Cabbalistical, such as the Divil might own very well, and in all probability was the author."

In Dee's original work the "Calls" and even the *Liber Logaeth* are open to a variety of interpretations, for they are part the paraphernalia of natural magic, part mathematical and astrological and part pure cryptography. Casaubon simplifies the presentation of them, though retaining the prolonged pedantry of the diction.

Altogether at least twenty-six books were dictated by the angels and most of them are not only totally unintelligible, but do not seem to be related to any of the usual cabbalistic or numerological systems. Dee himself does not appear to have succeeded in interpreting many of them. The first was the *Book of Enoch*, consisting of forty-nine tables, each of which, in Ashmole's words, "consisteth of forty-nine lines or rowes and every row of forty-nine words or letters. The first forty of this page, the first, have a worde in every little square which could not well be containyd in the little calls of a square table in this book."

But Dee was lured to make the effort to grasp all this because he was told that, if he succeeded in interpreting it correctly, "he will have as many powers subject to him as there are parts of the book in which every element hath forty-nine manners of understanding. . . . Therein is comprehended so many languages they are all spoken at once and severally themselves, by distinction, may be spoken."

It is easy to dismiss this as meaningless gibberish. It would be wrong to do so because the whole system has a positive pattern which leads logically from one conclusion to another, though the I.Q. required to follow it through would need not only to be on an extraordinarily high level, but require patience and concentration of an exceptional degree. One cannot dismiss the whole business as a fraud, because something that escapes normal explanation was occurring. Each one of the tables which Kelley had in front of him consisted of a large square subdivided into 49×49 small squares, each containing a letter of the Enochian alphabet. These letters were in apparently random order. Kelley would look into the crystal and see the angel pointing to one of these small squares in a replica of the table in the crystal and would call out—say, 4 D (as in map-reading). Dee would find the square in his table and write down the relevant letter, which would be

"a", if using the third tablet on Folio 18 of Ashmole 422—and so on letter by letter. The result was a sentence in Enochian written backwards. It is almost impossible to believe that this could be faked, especially when one remembers that there were ninety-eight tables to choose from and for memorising, if one was faking it.

Two conclusions only can be drawn from all this. Either Kelley actually saw and heard the bulk of what he reported to Dee, the missing or fluffed-up portions explaining much of the gibberish, or either one man or both were conducting an elaborate and complicated piece of make-believe for some special purpose, possibly a system of cryptography. It is perhaps just possible that what happened was a combination of both these conclusions.

I have consulted a wide variety of experts on Cabbalistical writings and languages prior to this period and all agree that Enochian was unique and different from them all. So there seems to be no question of Kelley having plagiarised, or cribbed from previous secret languages. Even if he had, it seems absolutely impossible that he could have memorised so complicated a system, though something of the sort might just conceivably have been achieved telepathically. That there are indications of the influence of Trithemius in all this cannot be disputed, but there are signs that suggest many departures from this Hermetic scholar, not the least important being that Trithemius decreed that there were no good female spirits and that such should never be called upon. Dee and Kelley frequently called up female spirits.

Enochian is a complete language of its own, with its own alphabet, grammar, tablets, Aethyrs, kings, seniors and has a complete system of "Calls" of its own. There is no reference to it prior to Dee's time and no positive record of its having been worked out between the date of Dee's death and when it was adopted by the Rosicrucian Order of the Golden Dawn in England about 1875.

So, if the Enochian alphabet did not come out of Dee's shew-stone, who invented it? It is a valid language of its own, but one needs a high intelligence quotient to attempt to decipher it.

Indeed, to attempt to learn it, one must make a dictionary of one's own solely by working on Casaubon's work and Dee's unpublished manuscripts and try to work out the grammar for oneself. But it is almost certain that each one who tries will get in some instances a different answer. Only by limiting, by selecting and rejecting, can one be sure of making permanent sense, and then only to a limited degree. Yet sense there is and, more even than sense, colour and majesty of prose marching regally, flowingly and gracefully forward on occasions, flashes of imaginative genius such as one associates with the visions of William Blake, and, here and there, astonishingly sound and accurate Intelligence reports amidst a welter of obscure, philosophical-mathematical orations. The "angelic conversations", if one excepts the occasional lapse into meaningless gibberish and obscurity, are on the whole more coherent than James Joyce's *Ulysses*, though curiously there is a parallel with *Ulysses* in the mythological pattern which runs through them. They also suggest a far greater concentration and creative effort than the published psychedelic visions of today.

All such magical systems, Enochian, Abramline, Solomonian seem to founder on the credulity and pride of the people practising them. That is to say, either directly, or through the medium of the sayer that they use, they get in touch with the "astral", "visionary", or "angelic" world and take what comes from these sources without the necessary cold douche of reason and logic. That world is—or so our experience should tell us—full of mischievous, deceiving, or self-deceiving rather than fraudulent entities, regardless of whether that world exists outside or only in one's subconscious mind. The results obtained from this source are as a rule on a spiritual level which is not worth much serious consideration—always, of course, with the few, though spectacular exceptions. All the major religions of the world, Christianity, Buddhism, Islamic and Taoist warn against it.

The writing down of the "angelic dictations" absorbed more and more of Dee's time. Even he was dismayed at the time he lost in trying to decipher them and each time he ventured to criticise them the angels condemned him.

Poor man! Each square table contained at least 2401 letters dictated one at a time. Dee once remonstrated that "if everie sude conteyne 49 rowes and everie row will require so much tyme to be received as this hath done, it may seem that very long tyme will be required in this doctrine's receiving. But if it be God's good liking, we would faine have some abridgement or compendious manner whereby we might sooner be in the works of God's service."

Immediately he made this very mild and meek request Kelley recorded that the chairs and the table which he saw in the shew-stone were snatched away and "seemed to fly to heaven." Dee then wrote in the margin of his book: "Note and take heede from hence forward."

The angels were stern task-masters. They told Dee he must learn their language so that he could "speake it without boke" and a few days later they rebuked him because he had not acquired this mastery of Enochian.

Here is an example of the Enochian language:

*"Madariatza das perifa Lil cabisa micaolazoda saanire caosago of fifia balzodizodarasa iada. Nonuca gohulime: micama adoianu mada faods beliorebe, soba oosano cabisa luciftias yaripesol, das aberaasasa nonucafe jimicalazodoma larasada tofejilo marebe pereryo Idoigo od torezodulape..."*⁴

This can be translated as: "O you heavens which dwell in the first air, you are mighty in the parts of the earth, and execute the judgement of the highest. To you, it is said, Behold the face of your God, the beginning of Comfort, whose eyes are the brightness of the heavens, which provided for you the government of the earth and her unspeakable variety, furnishing you with a power, understanding to dispose all things according to the providence of Him that sits on the holy Throne, and rose up in the beginning saying, The Earth, let her be governed by her parts, and let there be division in her, that the glory of her may be always drunken and vexed in itself..."

The "Call" goes on to say that the Earth should let her course run with the Heavens and ends with the invocation: "Open the

mysteries of your Creation and make us partakers of undefiled knowledge."

There is certainly no hint of black magic here. Indeed the language is rather that of the evangelist preacher. The influence is certainly that of the Bible and not that of the magicians.

Kelley complained on occasions that the spirits spoke to him in "lerner tongues" which he did not understand. Was this the reason why these same spirits addressed to him this rebuke and piece of advice: "Thou, o youngling, but old sinner, why dost thou suffer thy blindness to increase? Why not yield thy limbs to the service and fulfilling of an eternal verity? Pluck up thy heart and follow the way that leadeth to the knowledge of the end?"

This, of course, was exactly what Dee wanted to do, but Kelley was much more interested in materialistic things and was more eager to learn of scientific secrets which could enable him to find the formula for the manufacture of gold. There is evidence that on occasions Dee disapproved of the emphasis Kelley put on this and on one occasion when Dee was absent Kelley made an unsuccessful attempt to summon the spirit, Madimi, on his own account.

The language of the *Libri Mysteriorum*, or the *Spiritual Diaries*, in which the records of these seances are set down, is frequently ambiguous and difficult to interpret, but it makes it clear that the vigils in Dee's study went much further than normal crystal-gazing. This is demonstrated by the fact that the visions were seen *outside* as well as inside the crystal. Kelley was the dominant member of these seances in that he gave by far the fullest accounts of things. But from Dee's own interpolations it would seem that he himself received some messages and that he was not completely devoid of mediumistic gifts. It is equally clear, both from the nature of the "Calls" and the records of the visions that he was not seeking to speak with dead mortals, but with living angels, with, as he himself said, "the uttermost rank of Creatures Spirituall, the living Angels of God."

All the same, Dee's questions were not entirely of a philosophical or religious nature. He did put through Kelley a series of questions designed to give him answers on personal affairs,

matters of high policy and affairs of State. He wanted to know why his reformation of the Calendar had not been adopted. Dee knew the answer to this well enough; he may have been testing out the authenticity of the spirit. Dee was also in rather more serious financial straits at this time, his debts amounting to more than £300, and he wanted to have some answer to his problems. The spiritual voices offered little hope of a solution. The sum total of their wisdom was that money really mattered very little in the long run, or as Michael, the Angel of Wisdom, put it, "Thou must be patient and have faith."

But if the angels rebuffed Dee when he sought advice on practical matters, Dee himself was sometimes disturbed by the most unheavenly manifestations which Kelley related he had seen. Some of the spirits were "merrie and nowghty", attired in gaily flamboyant clothes and brandishing peacock's feathers, and they indulged in foolish ribaldries, bawdy talk and dancing. Then Dee would impatiently wish the seance to be ended. His confidence in achieving success seems to have been tempered with occasional fits of depression that such manifestations merely reflected the unworthiness of Kelley and himself to have any divine secrets revealed to them. His devout nature caused him to blame himself, never Kelley or the spirits themselves. And the answer to this, he told himself, was to pray for guidance and humbly to admit his own shortcomings.

Kelley seems to have lost patience with his master on several occasions, complaining that continual scrying in quest of divine truths was wasting time if the angels had no intention of making such revelations. Much better to concentrate on material things. Twice he threatened to leave Dee's service and seek some more profitable work. Always Dee replied that he was content to "bide God's time".

Perhaps the nearest he came to the truth he was seeking was when Madimi told him that there were no secrets except those which "lye buried in the shadow of men's soules." Dee interpreted this as meaning that God did not wish to hide anything from the faithful seeker after divine truth, that He had implanted

the secrets where they could be found, but that only devout meditation could bring them out of the shadows.

Even Casaubon, who was hostile to the whole conception of the "angelic conversations", paid this partial tribute to Dee: "Though his carriage in certain respects seemed to lay in works of darkness, yet all was tendered by him to kings and princes and by all (England alone excepted) was listened to for a good while with good respect, and by some for a long time embraced and entertained."⁵

DEE'S INFLUENCE ON ALEISTER CROWLEY

WHEN TOUCHING on magic in his diaries, Dee was singularly circumspect. One of the curious features about his diaries and many of his manuscript notes is that he frequently seemed to be writing as though a spy was watching over his shoulder, as though he feared discovery of his innermost thoughts. He would then write terse, short unembellished sentences, or cloak his thoughts in his vague and ambiguous prose, without venturing any positive opinion on purely thaumaturgic matters. Sometimes this ambiguity was clothed in odd Greek or Latin phrases. For example when he first noted in his diary that he had sight given to him "in chrystallo", he actually wrote that phrase in Greek, though the rest of the sentence was in English. This was before he met Kelley so on this occasion he certainly was not using Greek to keep secrets from Kelley. If he referred to magical practices at all, he would always carefully explain that these were "natural magic", or in accordance with the precepts of the most respectable of philosophers, or, if the practices had an aura of necromancy about them, he would underline his personal hostility to them. Thus he once noted that he had dissuaded Kelley from invoking an evil spirit.

This last statement by Dee is of special significance when set against Kelley's claims that he on some occasions urged Dee to discontinue scrying because of the presence of evil spirits. Who is the more truthful witness? On balance Dee must be considered far the more reliable, not merely because Kelley was

doing the scrying, or because of Dee's testimony that he was a liar, but that a close examination of Kelley's visions suggests that he interlarded many accounts of what he "saw" with many deliberately contrived stories of what he wished Dee to believe. To reconstruct the motives of these two men and the workings of their minds when indulging in these seances, in lucid, modern language is far from easy. "Natural magic" is in itself a foreign language and not easy to translate into any modern tongue. The ancients effectively cloaked the abstract in the mythological; the modern philosopher has learned to think and write in the abstract, but has lost a certain quality of magic in the process. From time to time writers, artists and philosophers have tried to bridge this gap between the ancient and the modern by creating a new style of language, or by the artificial use of drugs. A few, like Blake and Shelley, have achieved a kind of fourth-dimensional vision which has produced something like the language of the natural magicians. De Quincey sought much the same thing through opium, some modern writers have chased the rainbow of psychedelic visions through L.S.D. Dee, whose own efforts at verse were limited and not particularly good, may have understood this and this may explain why he switched from one language to another in setting down his thoughts. But, apart from this, he appeared to be terrified of any ignorant or unscrupulous person discovering his secrets: for what other reason would he write the single word *chrystallo* in Greek?

It is true he had a persecution mania, but not without good reason. At least twice he had been accused of sorcery, once he had been charged with it and on several occasions he was forced to take action against slanderers who alleged that he practised sorcery. There is also ample evidence that Saul was sent to spy on him and to implicate Dee in witchcraft practices; alterations in Dee's diaries by other persons, crossings-out and *addenda*, all suggest they had been tampered with many times.

Both Dee and Kelley were learned in the arts of natural magic and the Renaissance Magus, though Kelley possessed nothing approximating to the scholarship of Dee. Similarly, Kelley had mediumistic gifts whereas Dee lacked them, or only possessed

them to a small degree. Therefore the combination of scholarship and lack of scrying talent on the one hand, with a modicum of learning and a gift for crystal-gazing allied with loquacity on the other, was inevitably dangerous. It can be argued from the evidence already presented that the scholarship of Dee corrected and guided the emotionalism of Kelley. When Kelley mispronounced Latin he had heard from the angels, Dee would always correct it, and Dee would quite often check some angelic statement against references in his own library. There is no doubt that where Dee was patient and devout, Kelley was wildly emotional, given to outbursts of temper and ill humour and increasingly unstable. Perhaps the instability was accentuated by too much scrying, but Kelley's past record would suggest he had long been unstable.

It is easy to paint a picture of Dee as simply an unworldly man, piously seeking divine guidance. But this, of course, is the picture Dee himself wished to paint. It is undoubtedly true as far as it goes, but Dee had many motives besides this. His own thirst for knowledge—and especially for knowledge that would help him to pass important secrets to the Court—could have made Dee subconsciously anxious to manipulate the seances on occasions. He put to the angels through Kelley many questions on matters of State and there are indications, as will be seen more clearly later, that he sometimes used scrying either for, or as a mask for, Intelligence work. It is equally easy to depict Kelley as a charlatan with a vivid imagination, playing on Dee's devoutness and exploiting it simply to keep his well paid post. But this leaves unexplained the complexities of the Enochian language which Kelley could not have invented as he went along and which was far too complicated and abstruse a vehicle for deception. The real problems that require an answer are, firstly, in what ways did Kelley exploit Dee, and secondly, in what subtle measure did the highly intelligent Dee exploit Kelley. How much did Dee hide from Kelley of his secret purposes? Why did he put up with Kelley's often insufferable behaviour for so long, even after he suspected his scryer of unworthy motives?

But before attempting to answer these rather difficult questions

it will be enlightening to compare Dee and Kelley with two latter day practitioners of magic—Aleister Crowley and Victor Neuburg—and to contrast the “angelic conversations” of the two Elizabethans with seances carried out in the Sahara and elsewhere between the “Black Beast” and his companion. In one sense the comparison is unfair, for Crowley was not merely a pervert by nature, but had a perverted view of magic. If his magic meant anything at all, it meant simply demonic magic. But the comparison is not merely useful; it is essential. For Crowley and Neuburg invoked the Aethyrs of Dee and Kelley. They deliberately followed in their footsteps. What is more, the only complete records that exist of any other persons who invoked the “Calls” and employed the Enochian language were those supplied by Crowley and Neuburg.

John Symonds writes in his book, *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*, that “in spite of the publication of these Calls in Casaubon’s detailed and fascinating work, the magic of Dee and Kelley was not incorporated into the body of occult practice and no Magus of later times until the Golden Dawn was founded.”

This Hermetic order, started in the latter part of the nineteenth century by an occultist named MacGregor Mathers, had several lodges and about a hundred members. Among them were Yeats, the poet, Arthur Machen, the writer, A. E. Waite, the authority on magic, and Crowley himself. Crowley joined the Golden Dawn in 1898, taking the name of *Perdurabo* (“I will endure”) when his induction was performed with ceremonial magic. The name he took is strangely significant: the underlying thesis, if it can be called such, of all Crowley’s cabbalistic adventures, involved the idea of endurance tests, endurance of hardship, of fatigue, of mental and physical stress, of vices so arduous, ingenious and irksome that they might well be likened to a kind of sexual obstacle race. While the saints might endure all the orthodox hardships of self-imposed virtue, Crowley would endure all the quite considerable stresses of prolonged sexual indulgence and the most bizarre forms of unnatural vice.

Crowley had in common with the Rosicrucians a belief in reincarnation. He believed that in previous incarnations he had

lived as such diverse persons as Eliphas Levi, the author of many works on magic and Cabbala, as Count Cagliostro, the Sicilian adventurer and occultist, Father Ivan, a mysterious Russian, and Edward Kelley. Mr. Gerald Yorke, who knew Crowley well and studied with him, says "Crowley believed he was a reincarnation of Kelley. In other words he recognised in Kelley a kindred spirit. Having known Crowley for nearly thirty years and studied under him for three, and having read Casaubon, I can sense that affinity. Both men believed in what they were doing and in the 'Angels' (or whatever they were) with which they were, or believed they were, communicating.

"Crowley's Guardian Angel was called Aiwaz and I have always referred to him as Eyewash. But Crowley believed in him and other hierarchies, just as Kelley and Dee believed in the Enochian one. If you work the Enochian system and have or develop the necessary faculties, you can converse with the Angels as Dee and Kelley did and you can visit the thirty Aethyrs from Lil to Tex and describe them as Crowley did. But there is no published record of Dee and Kelley doing so. Crowley did it with Neuburg as his medium or scryer, using the relevant Calls as laid down in Casaubon, or in one of the Dee MSS. in the Ashmolean or British Museum. Aleister Crowley learned Enochian and could write it. All his notes and transcripts from the Dee MSS. were taken by his disciple Windram to South Africa. He did, however, publish a little about it in *The Equinox*, and there is more in Regardie's *Golden Dawn*, vol. 4."¹

This view of Crowley's *vis-à-vis* Dee and Kelley is borne out by others who knew the man. John Symonds writes that in Crowley's mind Edward Kelley was another of his incarnations and that "the adventurous nature and dubious reputation of Kelley made Crowley prefer him to John Dee, the scholar."²

It was in Mexico in 1900 that Crowley first used the nineteenth "Call" of Dee, but then, apparently, he only invoked the first two Aethyrs. This would seem to indicate that he had followed out the precepts of the Enochian language of doing everything in reverse and had worked the thirtieth and twenty-ninth Aethyrs. In 1909 he went to Algeria with a new-found friend,

Victor Neuburg, a promising young poet he had met at Cambridge. The object of this exercise was to emulate Dee and Kelley by making the Enochian "Calls" in the Sahara Desert. But the phrase "Desert" was somewhat of a figment of Crowley's imagination. In fact, they went not much farther than the oasis towns of Biskra and Bou-Saada. Crowley took Neuburg as his pupil and assumed the title of master, but in fact he much more resembled Kelley in his outlook and talents, just as Neuburg more closely had at least some of the characteristics of Dee. To begin with Crowley did not require a medium; he was himself so bubbling over with ideas and visions and a sense of his own importance and eternal existence in some guise or another that all he really wanted was a pliable accomplice who could record his impressions and join with him in his obscene practices. Crowley was impatient with and contemptuous of the devoutness and humility of Dee and much more interested in the personality of Kelley. Could it have been Kelley's grave-yard practices in the distant past which appealed to Crowley? It would seem highly probable. For there is nothing in any of the accounts of the "angelic conversations" which refers to bestial rites or sacrifices, or psychic-erotic acts. Yet all these things Crowley introduced into his magical practices. His aim was not so much to "receive" spirits and observe what they did and what they told him as to reach out into the astral plane in which he thought these spirits could be found and felt. He was not only the scryer, but the inhabitant of the spirits he desired to scry. He preferred to wrestle with Caliban rather than to listen to Zeus.

Crowley described how he and Neuburg went south from Algiers, "filling our lungs with pure air and renewing the austere rapture of sleeping on the ground and watching the stars... I cannot imagine why or how the idea came to me. Perhaps I happened to have in my ruck-sack one of my earliest magic notebooks, where I had copied with infinite patience the Nineteen Calls or Keys, obtained by Sir Edward Kelley from certain angels and written from his dictation by Queen Elizabeth's astrologer with whom he was working."³

Crowley made the "Calls" and dictated what he claimed to see

to Neuburg. Some distance from Aumale the twenty-eighth Aethyr was called; Crowley described the appearance of "a most frightful monster". The following day they went to Sidi Aissa and called the twenty-seventh Aethyr and so on to Bou-Saada, by which time they had called the twenty-third in the morning and the twenty-second in the afternoon. The actual details of Crowley's "visions" and of their bestial rites are both boring and revolting. But it is obvious that Crowley, apart from making the Enochian Calls, invented his own rites as they went along. On Mount Dal'leh Addin, for example, he and Neuburg arranged stones in a circle and within this "they traced in the sand magic words. In the centre of the design they built an altar. On the altar they placed themselves and 'in the sight of the sun' performed a homosexual act... They dedicated it to Pan... This was the first occasion on which they had ritually dedicated a sexual act."⁴

Sex, either heterosexual or homosexual, was the predominate feature of all Crowley's rites. But these had not been borrowed from Dee, though, as will be seen later, a heterosexual element was introduced into the "angelic conversations". Crowley's ideas were borrowed from Hindu and Islamic rites and based on the theme of what has been referred to by some occultists as "erotocomatose lucidity", by inducing a trance through excessive sexual indulgence brought close to the point of death. There was no hint of anything like this, not even of sexual rites, in the "angelic conversations". Then again, there is no evidence that Dee and Kelley used drugs or any other artificial aids for scrying, whereas Crowley on some occasions introduced a variety of drugs with known psychedelic properties into his seances.

Jean Overton Fuller, in her book, *The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg*, quoted an ex-Disciple of the Crowley cult as saying that Crowley and Neuburg "were using sex as a kind of starter to get themselves on to the astral plane... It was an experimental attempt to invoke Hermes and Jupiter, using the sex act to inflame the seer... Rosicrucianism was the ancient ritual with sex left out under the Christian influence. Crowley's *Argentum Astrum* was Rosicrucianism with sex put back."

As Crowley and Neuburg continued their seances in Algeria they became increasingly more like witchcraft and less like anything developed by Dee and Kelley. One learns that Crowley killed three pigeons he had brought with him from Bou Saada so that "the subtle counterpart of their blood would provide material for Choronzon to make a semi-physical body in which to manifest himself." By this time they had made the "Call" to the tenth Aethyr. This, according to Kelley, represented the most dangerous of all the Aethyrs, being inhabited by "that mightie devil, Choronzon", who had the powers of creating chaos which had to be confronted, dialectically refuted and finally vanquished.

But Choronzon in the minds of Dee and Kelley was little more than a symbol of destruction such as Bunyan conjured up in *Pilgrim's Progress*, a purely allegorical figure. Neither Dee, nor Kelley made any attempts to exorcise or propitiate this mythical monster. Crowley, however, performed a "banishing ritual" and claimed to see a demon who changed into an old man and then into a snake. The demon insisted that his name was "333", wailing that "the tenth Aethyr is the world of adjectives and there is no substance therein" and threatened Crowley and Neuburg with the tortures it could inflict.

In *The Vision and the Voice*, an unpublished manuscript, Crowley set out his magical workings on the principles of the Dee-Kelley "Calls". But his own description of his experiments suggests that, though the language he used and the Enochian visions in a few minor respects are similar to those of Kelley, they bear all the hall-mark of Crowley's own masochistic and erotic brain. The whole business seems really to have been the creation of a supernatural stage on which Crowley could strut and expound his own ideas, philosophy and perverted creed. But, having the mind of a megalomaniac, he wanted to participate in supernatural happenings, not merely to observe them. "When I say that I was in any Aethyr," he wrote, "I simply mean in the state characteristic of, and peculiar to, its nature. My senses would thus receive the subtle impressions which I had trained them to record, so becoming cognizant of the phenomena of those worlds as ordinary men are of this."⁵

Instead of a crystal ball Crowley used a golden topaz set in a Calvary cross of wood, painted vermilion. Thus, even by the scientific standards of crystalomancy, Crowley's experiment was completely devoid of any semblance of serious telepathy. There was no effort to reproduce the scrying technique of Dee, though it must be admitted that scrying has in past history been attempted by using jewels, consecrated beryls and even burnished steel. But the approach to "spiritual experience", if indeed one is not seriously overrating Crowley by adopting such a phrase, was utterly unscientific and totally unlike that of Dee.

Crowley stated that he held the topaz in his hand and "after choosing a spot where I was not likely to be disturbed, I would take this stone and recite the Enochian Key, and, after satisfying myself that the invoked forces were actually present, made the topaz play a part not unlike that of the looking-glass in the case of *Alice*."⁶

This in itself is proof of the difference in approach between Crowley and Dee. The former wanted to enter the astral world and explore it, the latter merely wanted knowledge from those who inhabited it.

Only in his Mexican experiment, where he invoked the thirtieth Aethyr, did Crowley have any vision closely resembling those of Kelley. "I am in a vast crystal cube in the form of the Great God Harpocrates," he recorded. "This cube is surrounded by a sphere. About me are four archangels in black robes." This resembled one of the Watch Towers described by Dee.

On one occasion at Cracow during the subsequent travels of Dee and Kelley there was a curious vision of four castles which a spirit known as Ave interpreted as "watch towers provided against the Devil." There was a castle for each point of the compass and each was in the care of a mighty angel so that the whole world appeared in the vision as under the protection of these invisible citadels and their garrisons. Much time was spent in drawing an elaborate diagram of all this. But, in contrast to Crowley, Dee was for ever seeking the "good Angels" and rejecting the demonic figures. While Kelley was nervous about the appearance of any evil spirits, Dee was calmly contemptuous of

them. Each was careful to have as few dealings as possible with anything demonic, though there is some evidence that, despite his fear of devils, Kelley was fascinated by them, just as he was with what he recorded as his "glimpse of hell". But Dee remained unperturbed by diabolical intrusions in the visions and merely dismissed them as "of no account". If he had been seeing the visions in a television set, he would undoubtedly just have switched the knob to another channel. The nearest approach to any of the diabolical visions of Crowley was when Kelley saw spirits ringed with fire and "all serpents, dragons, toads and all very ugly and hideous shapes of beasts appeared." Dee remained unimpressed.

The Enochian visions which Crowley claimed to have had were afterwards described in a magazine, *The Equinox*.⁷ But the sum total of these experiments was a great deal of bogus magic, pretentious and bombastic philosophising which mixed up Hindu occultism with Islamic witchcraft and a welter of feverish gibberish. But such ludicrous and debasing practices left their mark on both men: Crowley's mind was unhinged to the extent that he became increasingly megalomaniac and addicted to sadistic and masochistic practices, while Neuburg retained his sanity, broke with Crowley and returned to normality, but was never physically the same man again.

Neither Dee, nor Kelley went to such lengths, yet there are curious parallels between the respective pairs of scryers. Some of the visions of Dee and Kelley were similar to those of Crowley and Neuburg, but the seances never appeared to reach out to what was almost the point of no return, as was so often the case with Crowley. With Dee and Kelley there was quite often a drawing back from the spirit world to measure the angelic utterances against their own knowledge, or Dee's books of reference. Yet the "angelic conversations" still changed each man to some extent. The most curious parallel between Dee and Kelley on the one hand and Crowley and Neuburg on the other was that of a rift in their respective relationships. Even more curious is the fact that just as Neuburg never completely escaped from the influence of Crowley, even after they parted, so Dee to the end

of his days retained a certain regard for Kelley. The scrying changed both men to some extent. Dee became more careless of his finances, neglectful of his debts and indifferent to mundane things. He was gentler, dreamier and more dispassionate. But the experiences never changed his character or nature, or affected his loyalties. He never allowed himself to be infected with or influenced by the demonic. If anything, he became more critical. Only his relentless quest for supernatural revelations became obsessive. Kelley, on the other hand became more prone to irritability, sometimes wildly ambitious and increasingly convinced of his own importance. But he regarded scrying as a means to more material ends and seems to have been even less of a mystic than Crowley. The knowledge which Dee sought had no special interest for Kelley. But as far as the outside world was concerned both men retained their influence in the highest circles, not only in England, but on the continent as well for many years to come.

* * *

Madimi, the attractive, playful angel-child provided most of the light relief of the "angelic conversations". She also produced by far the most intelligible answers and the most interesting of the narratives. Madimi attracted Dee in a platonic kind of way and always seemed so much more human and delightful than the other angels. She was as curious about Dee and Kelley as they were about her. Dee not only treated her as a daughter, but actually named one of his daughters after her. Sometimes he was a little bewildered by her waywardness and frivolous acts, her dancing up and down the study. Before she started to grow up she had one irritating habit: she would insist on consulting her mother or sister on questions addressed to her.

Madimi would also be extremely annoyed if the seances were ever interrupted. Even Dee seemed to be loth to upset her; on one occasion he told her "if, without offence, we might now leave off [the seance], it might seem good to do so." And Dee himself expressed his annoyance once that they had not been warned of the coming of Mistress Frances Howard, a gentlewoman of the

Queen's Privy Chamber, as she had interrupted their scrying for an hour or two.

Quite early in the Dee-Kelley relationship there occurred one of those mysterious incidents which are so hard to interpret. Inevitably it poses the question of whether this was an instance of Kelley's cunning in manoeuvring the "angelic conversations" for his own purposes, or whether he was himself the uncritical slave of the spirits. Kelley had always professed a horror of marriage in discussing the matter with Dee. Then, on 29 April, 1582, the Angel Michael insisted that he should get married. According to Kelley, Michael said he "must betake" himself "to the worlde". "It is that I shall marry, which thing to do I have no natural inclination, neither with a safe conscience may I do it contrary to my vow and profession." He hoped there was some other meaning in the words.

Kelley gave the impression of being deeply affected by the angelic instructions, but considerably dismayed by them. We do not know what Dee said on the matter; we can imagine that his wife must have been both scornful and suspicious. It would seem that the decision was left to Kelley. At any rate he must have pondered on the proposition and weighed up the pros and cons for some days without making up his mind, for on 4 May the spirits were becoming restive at his indecisiveness and Dee recorded that "they willed him [Kelley] to marry."

Shortly afterwards Kelley married a girl of nineteen, named Joan Cooper from Chipping Norton. It may be merely a coincidence, but Chipping Norton was one of the most notorious haunts of witchcraft in England in Tudor times. Dee made no reference to the wedding, but this may have been due to the fact that Joan Kelley did not come immediately to live at Mortlake. The only reference made concerning her by anyone outside the Dee family circle was by the occultist, Francesco Pucci, in a letter to Dee, dated October, 1586, in which he described Jane Dee as "*lectissimam foeminam*" ('well-read woman') and Kelley's wife as "*rarum exemplum juvenilis sanctitatis, castitatis atque omnium virtutum*." (A rare example of youthful holiness, chastity and all the virtues).

As to Kelley's claims that he had a horror of marriage, these should not be taken too seriously, and certainly not as evidence that he was a woman-hater, though he appears to have become swiftly disenchanted by his young wife. Little more than a year after his marriage Kelley was saying: "I cannot abide my wife. I love her not, nay I abhor her, and here in the house I am disliked because I favor her no better."

From this it is clear that Kelley had little sympathy in the Dee household on his matrimonial disappointments. His uncontrollable temper soon revealed itself. There was a reference to a row at supper one night because, wrote Dee, Charles Sted had "done him an injurie in speeche at my table." Next morning the angelic voices passed judgement on Kelley's frame of mind, adjuring him to "Serve God and take hold of nettles."

In another angry scene shortly afterwards Jane Dee seems to have been involved. Dee's comment was that "by A[drian] G[ilbert] and Providence E.K.'s vehement passions were pacified. He cam back again to my howse and my wife was willing and quiet in mind and friendship of E.K. in word and countenance. A new pacification in all parts confirmed and all whom the confidence of God his service faithfully performed." Kelley's wife had not yet joined him at Mortlake even at this stage, but he seems to have had letters from her. His own in reply were full of self-pity and a rather unctuous piety. Thus he told his wife that he had gone to pray in his bedchamber with a "little prayer-book which Mr. Adrian Gilbert had left me . . . and it lay on the table during the action." The prayer-book, if such it really was, was certainly curious: its title was *The Seven Sobbes of a Sorrowful Soul for Sinne, knowledge of the end*. He explained that his troubles were due to Belmagel, "the firebrand who has followed my soul from the beginning."

It was shortly after this that Joan Kelley came to live at Mortlake. According to Pucci, Kelley secretly invoked spiritual aid in seeking a new mistress, "being desirous of the most exquisite form of womanhood in angelic shape". Kelley was a somewhat frustrated romantic, a man whose highly imaginative and ecstatic desires reduced him to impotence before he could approach the

woman on whom he lavished his dreams. He undoubtedly possessed something of a Dante complex, idealising a spiritual Beatrice while sadly taking unto himself a wife. Thus while Kelley desired women, he was frightened of the sexual act and regarded marriage as a drudgery.

In the Warburg Institute in London is an unusual, beautifully illuminated manuscript by Dee, produced with loving care both in the actual writing of the Latin and the carefully painted cornucopial embellishments, entitled *Tuba Veneris*. It is dedicated to the magical arts of love and is a ritual for invoking Venus. But if this sounds most unlike the serious-minded Dee, it must be admitted that there is nothing unduly erotic or even magical in the manuscript. It seems possible that Kelley may have had rather more to do with this than Dee, that he may indeed have been the instigator of the invocation and possibly have used it in secret. The most remarkable thing is that the manuscript should have survived in such excellent condition; one can only attribute this to the high quality of workmanship and the fact that people do not lightly destroy anything written about the Goddess of Love.

I have no evidence for attributing the authorship of this invocation to Kelley. One must admit that the work is that of Dee. But at the same time Dee made no record of any invocations to Venus and any "angelic conversations" resulting from these would surely have been fascinating indeed. But I suspect that Kelley may well have regarded *Tuba Veneris* as a talisman to achieving rather more satisfactory sexual relationships than he found in his domestic life.

While Milton could fulminate in righteous indignation against the sins of his age, he could also write verse about "pert fairies and dapper elves". And in ironical contrast, just as Dee could spend so much loving care in writing and illustrating an invocation to Venus, so one often catches a note of Puritanism in his diary. On 13 January, 1583, he noted that "On Sonday the stage at Paris Gardens fell down all at ones, being full of people beholding the bearbayting. Many being killed thereby, more hart and all amased. The godly expownd it as a due plague of God for the wickednes there usid, and the Sabath day so profanely spent."

AN INVITATION TO POLAND

ALL THIS time Dee remained on excellent terms with the Queen and those at Court. On 11 February, 1583, the Queen, who was on her way to have dinner with Walsingham, passing Dee's house on the way, "gratiously called me to her and so I went by her horse side as far as where Mr. Hudson dwelt."

A week later Dee recorded that "the Lady Walsingham cam suddenly into my howse very freely and shortly after that she was gone cam Sir Francys himself and Mr. Dyer."

Was Dee at this time being consulted by Walsingham on the problem of Mary, Queen of Scots? Walsingham was one of Mary's most implacable enemies, always seeking to trap her into some indiscretion and to remove her from the political arena, preferably by death. He regarded her as a permanent threat to his Queen's security. There is a curious note in Dee's manuscripts about this time which poses the rather strange equation of "30 plus M=Bess plus 333. Speke to $\Delta \Delta$ & W." Was this a reminder for him to speak to his friend Christopher Hatton, nicknamed "Lids", and Walsingham about some matter of Intelligence? "30", we know, was a code for the son of Mary, Queen of Scots and Dee was certainly privy to this code. "30 plus M" could mean James and his mother, Mary. But what of "Bess plus 333"?

Here I can only hazard a guess that "Bess" could refer to the notorious Bess of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury, a malicious-tongued intriguer who had alleged that Elizabeth had indulged in sexual orgies with Leicester, Simier and Alençon, and who

was known to have corresponded secretly with Mary, Queen of Scots. But "plus 333"? Could Crowley provide the answer here? Was this his "333" sign of Choronzon or Chaos, being used to denote that the Countess of Shrewsbury's intentions were to promote the interests of the House of Stuart by her own devilish tongue? Dee used numerical signs for his spiritual creatures, whether angelic or diabolical and "333" may well have been one of them. The theory, admittedly partly guess-work, takes on a certain air of truth when one considers that Mary had declared that her son had agreed to associate himself with her in the Crown of Scotland. This not only indicated that Mary regarded her abdication of the throne at Leven as being invalid, but offered a distinct threat to Elizabeth. Whichever way one looks at the cryptic comment it is certain that "333" was a code and that this was a note on Intelligence matters.¹

Later this same year—5 May, 1583—similar intelligence matters were touched on in the angelic conversations. Dee put this question to the Angels:

"As concerning the vision wch yesterday was presented to the sight of E.K. as he sat at supper with me in my hall—I mean the appearing of the very great sea and many ships thereon and the cutting off the hand of a woman by a tall, black man, what are we to imagine thereof?"

To which Uriel, the Angel, replied: "The case did signifie the provision of forraigne powers againste the welfare of this land which shall shortly be put into practice, the other the death of the Queene of Scotts is not long unto it."

In the margin of this manuscript Dee drew an axe and wrote "Q of S to be beheaded." Mary was executed four years later, on 8 February, 1587.

The forecast of the execution of Mary could have been made by any politically knowledgeable person at this time, for it had been a possibility for some years and the Radical wing of English politicians had ardently desired it. But the other forecast is much more interesting, even though it is lacking in detail. "The provision of forraigne powers againste the welfare of this land" could only refer to preparations for the Spanish Armada. This was

either a remarkable example of clairvoyance, or the utilisation of the "angelic conversations" for passing Intelligence messages. Nothing whatsoever was known about the Armada plans in Walsingham's own Intelligence service at the time. Conyers Read, Walsingham's biographer, wrote that "Philip's preparations for the Armada were hardly under way before they were revealed to the English Government. This was not due to any particular efficiency of Walsingham's Secret Service, but to the fact that nothing was done in Spain to conceal them."² But Walsingham had no espionage service in Spain at this time and depended for Intelligence reports on that country mainly from news brought back by English merchants who had braved the Spanish embargo on English shipping. The first record of any Intelligence on Armada plans from one of Walsingham's agents was from one, Thomas Rogers, who landed at Dartmouth on 10 December, 1585, with news of ships being assembled in Spanish ports. This was more than two years after Uriel's "message".

In the spring of 1583 talks on Dee's colonisation plans were still being continued. Dee hit on the idea of inviting Adrian Gilbert to take part in the "angelic conversations" in order that the spirits could be asked for "descriptions of the countries for his better instruction." Kelley may not have liked Gilbert's intrusion into the seances. At least the spirits seem to have disapproved, for no satisfaction was obtained from this session and Gilbert appears to have been regarded with some suspicion. At a later seance, when Dee broached the subject of his proposal for spreading the Gospel among the heathen races overseas, he posed the question: "Now hath it been said that he [Gilbert] should be the setter forth of God, his faith and religion among the Infidels?"

To which Madimi replied. "That is a mystery."

Dee: "As concerning Adrian Gilbert, what pleaseth you to say of him and his intended voyage?"

Madimi: "He is not of the true faith."

Dee and Kelley must have paid a number of visits to Somersetshire and the reasons for these were not always—at least as far as Dee was concerned—connected with the quest for a formula

for gold. There is a reference in Dee's MSS. to "the enchanted springes of the kingdom of Logres", followed by some cipher notes which seem to suggest that Dee had been attempting to analyse the waters of the springs near Pocock's Cave at Chilton Polden, and the Chalbrick Mill Stream. Here Dee may have been seeking for a new medicinal water for the Queen, for he had already given her much advice on such matters. If so, his hunch was not far wrong, for a modern analysis of these spring waters has revealed them to be rich in calcium sulphate, calcium carbonate and magnesium sulphate. Certainly there is evidence that Dee mapped out some of the zodiacal effigies in this district, though the puzzle is how he found the key or code to locate them as they were purposely designed to be invisible to all who did not possess the key. This key is now lost and the effigies can only be traced on large-scale ordnance maps by means of aerial reconnaissance of the district.

Dee's purpose in charting the effigies may have been partly in a search for ancient astronomical and astrological lore, or in a quest for the Holy Grail, for centuries associated with the mythical voyage of Joseph of Arimathea to the British Isles and his establishing of Christianity at Glastonbury. Photographs from the air transferred to ordnance survey maps provide the best and most accurate modern version of this extraordinary example of ancient craftsmanship, with cunningly concealed effigies arranged in the traditional design of Zodiacal and other constellar figures, all set out in their proper order. Dee may well have obtained the key from reading continental books and manuscripts on the Arthurian legends and *La Queste del Saint Graal*. K. E. Maltwood, in his *Guide to Glastonbury's Temple of the Stars*, writes:

"It is easier to see the Phoenix' outline on the O.S. sheets than from the top of Glaston Tor; that applies to all the Zodiacal Creatures, for they are so vast it is impossible to make out their drawings hidden in woods, under hills, or by houses, and too exhausting to follow them on foot; this explains why only initiates could see the Grail.

"The curves of rivers and hills suggested living creatures to

early man, but it needed a race of artists who understood how to measure the heavens as well as the earth, to resolve these existing natural forms into a circular design to fit the stars. It was an 'art founded on the principles of Geometry.' Half the outlines of seven Giant figures are drawn by natural water courses, which rather points to the idea that Mother Earth first suggested the design, though the scientific knowledge required to adapt it undoubtedly came by the same route that 'Joseph the tin merchant' used from the East."³

Such positive evidence of ancient astronomical knowledge being utilised in Somerset would fully have justified Dee's researches here. At that period the effigies, if properly charted, would have provided an invaluable scientific check for any astronomer. In this persistent probing into the past for scientific purposes, an extremely difficult task, even if Dee had the key to these mysteries, one gets a glimpse of the diligence, patience and determination that also made Dee such a first-rate Intelligence agent.

For it is clear that in 1582 and 1583 Dee had certainly not "gone into retirement", as so many writers have suggested he did when the scrying operations began. Both he and Kelley, separately and together, made many journeys during this period, most of them ostensibly with the object of seeking buried treasure, or finding precious minerals, as well as Dee's missions on behalf of Walsingham and Dyer and his frequent conferences on the colonisation plans. There was also one short journey abroad by Dee on some unnamed business for the Queen.

On 18 March, 1583, Dee noted in his diary that "Mr. North from Poland after he had byn with the Queen he cam to me. I received salutation from Alaski, Palatine in Poland."

This marked the arrival in England of a curious visitor, Aldabert, or Albertus, Laski, a Polish nobleman who was the representative of King Stephen of Poland. The purpose of Laski's visit to England was obscure, but he was nevertheless warmly received by the Queen and feted wherever he went. Burghley wrote to Christopher Hatton that the Queen "seemeth to doubt that he departeth from his Prince as a man in displeasure, since

he had in a letter to her called her 'the refuge of the disconsolate and the afflicted.'"

Elizabeth, with her quick intuition, may have decided that a man in this frame of mind might well speak to her more freely than the average ambassador. Possibly she saw him as a useful source of Intelligence. Whatever her motives, she gave Laski the honours normally reserved for visiting royalty. The fact that Dee "received salutation" from Laski on his arrival in England suggests that Laski had already heard of him. It may have been that he asked the Queen to be introduced to Dee, or that Dee sought an interview. What is abundantly clear is that the Queen was anxious for the two men to meet and that she gave Dee money through the Earl of Leicester for the purpose of entertaining Laski.

On 13 May Dee wrote: "I became acquainted with Albertus Laski in the Erle of Leicester his chamber in the Court of Greenwich. This day was my lease of Devonshire mynes sealed at Sir Leonnell Ducket's howse."

Five days later Dee recorded that Laski came to see him at Mortlake. In June Laski visited Oxford and by order of the Queen was entertained in the most regal fashion with banquets, plays, pageantry and "public disputations". From Dee's diary it would seem that Sir Philip Sidney accompanied Laski to Oxford, for immediately after this visit Sidney brought Laski to see Dee again at Mortlake. Dee noted that Lord Russell and Sidney accompanied Laski, who was "rowed over by the Queene's men. He had the barge covered with the Queene's cloth and the Queene's trumpeters. He cam of purpose to do me honour, for which God be prayed."

The following night Laski again came to Mortlake and stayed at his house all night. The Queen had been told by Leicester that Dee was unable to entertain Laski to dinner unless he sold some of his plate or pewter. So Elizabeth sent him "within one hour forty angells of gold from Sion [presumably Sion House, near Brentford] by the Erele of Leicester, his secretary, Mr. Lloyd" and Dee added that "Mr. Rawlegh has letter unto me of Her Majestie's good disposition unto me."

All this seems to make it abundantly clear that there was some

political purpose in the first place behind the meeting of Dee and Laski. But it is equally obvious that very quickly Laski became fascinated with Dee's learning and was most curious about his reputation as a seer. He was anxious to see Dee's library and to talk to him about magic, a subject in which Laski claimed to be a student. Possibly on the night on which Laski stayed at Mortlake he was inducted into the "angelic conversations" for the first time. If not, he certainly joined in them very soon afterwards, for it was recorded that Laski's guardian angel, Jubanladec, appeared to Kelley.

Laski left behind with Dee three questions which he begged him to submit to the spirits. These were in Latin and read as follows: (1) *De vita Stephani Regis Poloniae quid dice possit?*; (2) *An successor eius erit Albertus Laski, ex domo Austryaia?*; (3) *An Albertus Laski Palatina Saradiensis habebit regum Moldavine?*

Now if the "angelic conversations" were being used on occasions as a cover for espionage, here was the perfect opportunity to put this method into action. For from those questions it would have been possible to deduce something of Laski's motives and desires. In short, Laski was anxious to know how long his royal master, King Stephen would live, whether Laski would succeed him and whether he would also acquire authority over neighbouring dominions. He appears to have had favourable answers. Laski was informed that he would shortly become King of Poland, with the accession of certain other territories, and that he would overcome the Saracens and the Paynims and go down in history as a mighty conqueror. These prophecies undoubtedly encouraged the easily flattered Laski to pay further visits to Mortlake.

Laski was an intriguing politician who had for many years become involved in a variety of plots in various parts of Europe. He had taken bribes from the French for assisting in getting Henry of Valois on to the throne of Poland and was one of the delegates who went to France to announce to the new King his elevation to the sovereignty of Poland. When Henry was deposed Laski voted for Maximilian of Austria. He was also a Prince of Siradz and Palatine of Sendomir, but he had already dipped so

deeply into his enormous wealth in such prodigal fashion that in order to seek more money he had become addicted to alchemy and seeking out alchemists. Now he coveted the throne of Poland; this much Dee and Kelley found out through manipulation of their seances and no doubt Dee passed the information back to the Court. It soon became clear that Laski was a greedy man and that if "magicians" could provide him with more money by magical means, then he was prepared to deal with them. He told Dee he needed the maximum amount of aid from the spiritual creatures and that he would reward him and Kelley handsomely if they produced the right results.

Nowhere in his diary does Dee admit being a party to deceiving Laski, but this in itself is not surprising. Either Dee's intentions were stupidly misguided and he had become the supreme dupe of the spirits, or he was deliberately exploiting the situation for espionage purposes or for his own gain. If, for the moment, a question mark must be left here as far as Dee was concerned, there is no doubt that Kelley was the first to scent rich rewards from this new patron if he and Dee played along with Laski. Indeed, the idea of returning with Laski to Poland may first have occurred to Kelley, for he told Dee about this time that it was dangerous for him to remain in England as he might at any moment be arrested. Dee noted in his diary on 5 June that "E.K. was disturbed because his brother Thomas said the authorities were about to apprehend him as a fellow for coyning money." Dee made a marginal comment of an ambiguous nature here: "Meer untruth." Whether he meant that Kelley was not guilty of coining, or that he did not believe Kelley's story is not clear.

Kelley was at this period a severe trial to the Dee household. The domestic atmosphere was marred by his moody outbursts and wild fits of anger. These were frequently directed against his young wife, for whom he did not now show the slightest vestige of affection. Jane Dee did her utmost to comfort Mrs. Kelley and seems to have been exceptionally kind to her. Yet the feeding of the Kelleys must have put a further strain on Dee's diminishing resources. It was no new experience for Dee to be short of ready cash, but he was now permanently in financial

difficulties. His own family was still growing in size and he was much worse off because the scrying activities were taking up time that had previously been devoted to the more profitable side-line of drawing people's horoscopes. This work had latterly been neglected. The Queen continued to provide some funds, but these were mainly spent on entertaining Laski and his entourage on their frequent visits to Mortlake.

Meanwhile Kelley was always trying to pick a quarrel with Dee and to seek some excuse for leaving his service. This all seems to point to his scheming to get an appointment from Laski, or he may have been playing off Laski against Dee and Dee against Laski, as he complained about each in turn to the other. He accused Dee of unfair treatment, but made no specific charges except that he was wasting his time and talents. Kelley worked himself into such violent rages that Dee believed his scryer was possessed of evil spirits, the very demons which Dee had always dismissed with contempt. For a long time Dee was patient with his servant, regarding him as a victim of his own temperament and trusting in Providence to set matters right. Then he decided that drastic measures were necessary and he insisted that Kelley must undergo a ceremony of exorcism. It was not an orthodox ecclesiastical ceremony, but appears to have been undertaken by Madimi in one of the seances. Madimi put some pertinent questions to Kelley: "What dost thou hunt after? Speak, man, thou lovest not God? . . . Dost thou love silver and gold? The one is a thief, the other a murderer. But thou hast a just God that loveth thee, just and virtuous men delight in thee. Therefore be thou virtuous."⁴

One cannot be sure how much Dee was the prime mover in this scrying effort. The voice may have been that of Madimi, but the sentiments were those of Dee. And undoubtedly the bad conscience of Kelley must have been tormenting him at the time. Madimi described Dee's "faith and imagination" as being "a sight perfecter than thine", pointing to Kelley. The girl-spirit then summoned up the spirit of Barna and his fourteen evil companions, who were supposed to have control over Kelley, and ordered them to return to "the Prince of Darkness". Kelley

then claimed that he saw the whole devilish crowd of spirits sink through the floor of the chamber.

And on 8 June, 1583, Dee noted in his diary: "*Conversio E.K. ad Deum, abdicatus omnibus diabolicis experimentis Nihil apparunt hodie.*" In short, Kelley was brought back into a more godly frame of mind and his experiments with the demonic spirits were ended. He had been frightened with his "glimpse of hell" and for a time at least he claimed that he felt much better after the exorcism. But the "angelic conversations" were discontinued for some time after this date. It is clear that Dee had insisted that Kelley should desist from scrying until he had fully recovered from his neurotic bouts.

Jane Dee would have liked to see this tormentor of the household leave at once and she again warned her husband that further association with Kelley would be disastrous for them all. But Dee insisted that Kelley should be given one more chance. But soon even Dee was having doubts. He wrote that "My heart did throb oftentimes this day and I thought E.K. did intend to absent himself from me, and now upon his warning, I was confirmed and, more, assured that it was so. Whereupon seeing him make such haste to ride to Islington, I asked him why he so hasted to ride thither. And I said if it were to ride to Mr. Harry Lee, I would go thither also, to be acquainted with him... I answered that if the 40 pound annuity which Mr. Lee did offer him was the chief cause of his mind feeling that way (contrary to some of his former promises to me) that then I would assure him of 50 pounds yerely, and would do my best to follow up my sute [with the Queen] to bring it to pass as soon as I possibly could, and thereupon did make him promise upon the Bible. Then E.K. again, upon the same Bible, did swear unto me constant friendship and never to forsake me; and moreover said that unless this had so faln out, he would have gone beyond the seas, taking ship at Newcastle within eight days next. And so we did plight our faith to one another, taking each other by the hands upon these points of brotherly and friendly fidelity during life, which covenant I beseech God to turn to his honour, glorie and service and the comfort of our brethren here on earth."

Perhaps Kelley had tried to make a secret deal with Laski at Dee's expense and had been rebuffed. Perhaps by threatening to give his services to Harry Lee and indulging in more tantrums, he hoped to blackmail Dee into giving him more money. At any rate he succeeded in getting his own way and all was once again forgiven.

But how much was Kelley using his neurotic fits as a mask for other and more sinister designs against Dee, or to further his own ends? In August Dee noted in his diary that "a Worcestershire man, a wicked spy cam to my howse, whom I used as an honest man, and found nothing wrong as I thought. He was sent to E.K." There is no explanation of this incident, nor of why the man was sent to Kelley. But it is a strange coincidence that both the man and Kelley came from Worcestershire.

Conversations with the spirits for the benefit of Laski continued. The Pole was told that he was looked after by a good angel named Jubanladec, a name which had an oddly Polish ring about it. The spiritual was mixed with the practical in the seances which concerned Laski. One moment he was asked: "What do ye seek after? Do ye hunt after the swiftnes of the winds? Or are you imagining a form unto the clouds? Or go ye forth to hear the braying of an asse, which passeth away with the swiftnes of the air? Seek for true wisdom, for it beholdeth the highest and appeareth unto the lowest." The next moment Laski was being told by his guardian angel that Burghley "hateth" him "to the heart and desireth he was gone hence."

It was Dee who conducted the questioning of the spirits regarding Laski. He asked them what was their advice as to whether Laski should return to Poland. Perhaps Laski needed provisions and money?

"He shall be helped," was the reply, "perhaps miraculously. Let him go soon as he can conveniently."

Dee: "I say again perhaps he wanteth money."

But here again the spirits were vague beyond indicating that Laski should escape from danger and return to Poland and that they would "minister such comfort to him as shall be necessary in the midst of all his doings."

Dee also received mysterious warnings through Madimi of his own danger from spies who suspected the Pole of treason and believed Dee was in league with him. Burghley and Walsingham, according to Madimi, had joined forces against Dee and were plotting to trap him and have his house searched. The spirits also hinted to Laski that Dee's services might be necessary on the continent to help Laski "establish his kingdom".

Now it is clear that Burghley had from the beginning been suspicious of Laski's motives. It is equally clear that Dee had been encouraged both by the Queen, Walsingham and others to entertain Laski and, almost certainly, to spy on him. It is true that at this time certain unnamed people, possibly agents of Kelley, were plotting against Dee. But there is nothing whatever to suggest that either Burghley or Walsingham were at this period suspicious of Dee; indeed all the evidence shows that they continued for years to keep in the closest touch with him and give him their trust. Therefore, if one disregards the "evidence" of the angelic witnesses, one can only conclude that either Kelley or Dee, or both men in collaboration were passing on to Laski whatever information they wanted him to believe. The story about Burghley and Walsingham suspecting Dee as well as Laski could have served the purpose either of Kelley, who wished to leave the country, or Dee, if he was spying for his country.

Laski was impressed by Dee's knowledge of genealogy and, being convinced that he was descended from an ancient and noble English family, he asked Dee to work out his pedigree. For some reason Dee must have fallen behind schedule in producing this pedigree, for there was a reference in Dee's notes that it was "barely begun". However that precocious angel-child Madimi came to the rescue and promised Dee to finish the pedigree book exactly as Dee would have written it. No matter where the book was left, locked up or lying about, she would find it and complete it.

There was a strangely obscure conversation between Dee and Madimi on this subject. He had been asking her whether he would "suffer any more pangs", when she replied: "Curst wives and great Devils are sore companions."

Dee: "In respect of the Lord Treasurer, Mr. Secretary and Mr. Rawly, I pray you what worldly comfort is there to be looked for? Besides that I do particularly put my trust in God."

Madimi: "Madder will staine, wicked men will offend and are easie to be offended."

Dee: "And being offended will do wickedlye to the persecution of them that mean simply?"

Madimi: "Or else they were not to be called wicked."

Dee: "As concerning Albert Laski, his pedigree, you said your sister would tell all."

Madimi: "I told you more than all your dog painters and cat painters can do."

Here Kelley impatiently interrupted with the blunt inquiry: "Will you, Madimi, lend me a hundred pounds for a fortnight?"

Madimi: "I have swept all my money out of the doors."

Dee: "As for money, we shall have that which is necessary when God seeth time."

By this time Kelley was desperately anxious to go to Poland with Laski who, by the beginning of September, had decided to return home. Possibly this decision was influenced by the information given to him about Burghley's mistrust of him. He offered to take both Dee and Kelley with him and to give them employment. From the moment the offer was made Kelley was obviously the more enthusiastic of the two and he urged Dee to agree to the plan. For good measure, he claimed that the spirits also supported the proposal. Dee gave the impression of having some doubts about the wisdom of leaving England at this time. He had dreamed about losing all his books and he feared that something might happen to them in his absence. However, in the end he agreed to Laski's offer and left his brother-in-law, Nicholas Fromond, to look after the house.

On 31 September Dee wrote in his diary that "we went from Mortlake and so the Lord Albert Laski, I, Mr. E. Kelley, our wives, my children and familie, we went toward our two ships attending us, seven or eight myle below Gravessende."

They left in a hurry and with considerable secrecy, keeping their journey quiet even from their neighbours. It has been sug-

gested that Dee made no effort to inform anyone at Court of his plans and that he did not even wait to obtain the royal licence before setting out. But this seems highly improbable: the secrecy in the travelling arrangements was possibly insisted on by Laski, who by this time seems to have been thoroughly alarmed by reports of his being in some danger in England. If one examines closely Burghley's correspondence with the Queen, one will find occasional guarded references to "good Master Dee" in the period immediately after his departure. Burghley also signified to the Archbishop of Canterbury that Dee had gone overseas "by her [the Queen's] good favour and license." If Dee was really spying on Laski and the Polish Court, it was unlikely that he would advertise the fact that he had obtained the Queen's permission for his voyage. He would have been much more likely to wish to give the impression that he, too, was in some danger.

Kelley may have had the intention of staying on the continent for an indefinite period, but everything seems to indicate that Dee did not expect to be away for more than a few months. He took very few books and papers with him; his library of more than four thousand books and seven hundred manuscripts was left intact at Mortlake. There is some suggestion that Dee would have preferred to leave wives and family behind, but Kelley, surprisingly, after all the hatred he had shown his wife, wanted her to accompany them.

For Kelley this was the chance he had long been waiting for—a rich patron who was much more interested in the manufacture of gold than Dee, and the prospect of being able to acquire some semblance of personal power. In Mortlake Dee was not only nominally the master, but he was the man received at Court, praised for his industry and erudition, consulted by Walsingham, Leicester and Burghley, while Kelley remained in the solitude of his chamber, a lone and uncourted scryer. But on the continent Kelley visualised a very different position for him. There he and Dee would be on equal terms and, with the kind of scheming to which Dee would never have stooped (except in the cause of his Queen), Kelley could in time become more powerful and important than his master.

EXPELLED BY THE EMPEROR OF BOHEMIA

DEE, KELLEY and their families met Laski at a rendezvous on the Thames, but they did not travel up to London until after dark. Then they went by wherries to Greenwich, where Dee took his party to the house of his friend, Goodman Fern, a potter who had often been employed by Dee to make his laboratory equipment. After a brief stay there they went on to Gravesend.

The Dees, their three children, Arthur, Katherine and Rowland, Laski and the Kelleys joined one ship and Laski's men, Dee's servants and the horses embarked in the other.

They ran into trouble shortly after leaving Gravesend. The next morning, on reaching Queenborough Haven, the party put ashore in small fishing boats which became water-logged and very nearly sank. Dee in his diary expressed gratitude to Kelley for saving their lives by baling out with his gauntlet. After three nights ashore the party set off again, crossing the North Sea and then sailing along the sluggish canals to Amsterdam, where they stayed another three days. Changing boats, the journey was continued up the Zuider Zee and along the canals again to Leeward and then to Dokkum in West Friesland. The crystal was not neglected during their journey and in Dokkum it was recorded that the angel Gabriel gave them a lecture on how to conduct themselves. They were told all to live in "brotherly charity... the imperfections of each to be by the others perfectly shadowed in charity."

There were other spiritual manifestations en route. On another

occasion the angel Uriel appeared and warned them of the rapid approach of the anti-Christ. A diary reference of Dee's mentioned an "emissary from Danemark", who brought a bag of amber and news of the Danish King's messages to Queen Elizabeth. At Bremen, where they stayed a week, Dee noted that Kelley, scrying by himself, had reported being given by the angels a prophetic verse of thirty-two lines, foretelling the downfall of England, Spain, France and Poland. From Bremen the party travelled on by coach to Hamburg, where they stayed at "the English House" (probably the Consul's residence), and eventually they reached Lubeck early in November. Though glad their journey was ended, feelings of foreboding seemed to overcome both men. Kelley was depressed and moaning about lack of money, while Dee was worried about the safety of his belongings back at Mortlake. Kelley then reported a vision of Dee's house being burned by a mob.

In fact the warnings were partially borne out. About this time in England a hostile mob broke into Dee's house and destroyed all his books and instruments, though they did not burn the dwelling. When news of this outrage reached the Queen she ordered that seals should be put on the house and that it should be safeguarded from further attacks. No doubt this wilful destruction was inspired by Dee's enemies and no doubt they hoped to discover some incriminating evidence among the books and papers. Did Kelley have foreknowledge of this act of looting? Or was it just coincidence that in this prophecy he had hit on the truth? Dee was grieved when the news eventually reached them, but he made no effort to return to Mortlake.

It is from this point in Dee's life that his behaviour and even some of his writings were marked by inconsistency and ambiguity and certainly much more difficult to interpret. It was not so much that there was any marked metamorphosis in his character, but that increasingly he did and said one thing and appeared to mean something quite different. This can in part be explained by the influence of Kelley and the fact that his scryer became more temperamental and devious himself. But there is much else that is not at all easy to explain except that it showed a tendency

towards Machiavellian principles. The devoutness, the rather pompous integrity of Dee were leavened by a temporising attitude, an effort to be all things to all people; to go along with Kelley on occasions in the less reputable forms of scrying, possibly to appease the man; to be pro-Roman Catholic to Laski and yet to write to the arch-Protestant Walsingham in the most scathingly critical term of Jesuitical imbroglios that Dee claimed to have unmasked. Hitherto Dee, while he may have kept secret the nature of his many missions abroad, had been an open publicist on the need for England to have a proper Intelligence system. He had years before written a treatise urging that Englishmen of mature age should travel on the continent and seek information of value to their country and he had implied that they should be prepared to spy for their Queen. Now he took greater pains to conceal his connections with any such system, and indeed even to suggest to people like Laski that he had enemies at Court and was prepared to seek his fortune and sell his services outside England. He even masqueraded as a staunch ally of some foreign powers. And this changed attitude, as will soon be seen, was most marked in the "angelic conversations". Much more practical information began to be mixed up with the purely spiritual.

Meanwhile the spirits sought to cheer up the misanthropic Kelley. "Pluck up thine heart," urged one angel, "and pine not away with inward groaning." And, as though to paint a picture of a glowing future, Kelley was told that a royal patron was waiting to receive them and reward them.

The winter was hard and cold and while Laski was all for pressing on to Cracow, Kelley suggested they should let him go ahead, if he wished, but that he and Dee and their families would remain where they were until the spring. Dee, however, said this would be grossly discourteous and unfair to their new employer, so they set off again, going by Wismar to Rostock and Stettin, which they reached on Christmas morning. It was not until February that they finally came to Cracow.

Dee and his party lodged near a church in Cracow and the angelic voices at the seances counselled the travellers to observe holy days and to attend divine services frequently. We have

already observed that Dee had something of an ecumenical spirit and this was most marked on his continental visits. He had a personal view of a "Universal Church" which embraced all denominations and he readily entered into Catholic masses in Poland and, when in such Protestant countries as Germany and Holland, just as happily attended whatever form of service happened to be held there.

He had comforting news through the voice of Madimi that "all was well at Mortlake" and that the Queen was still his friend.

But it soon became obvious that Laski had nothing like the wealth he had indicated to Dee and Kelley and Kelley was so worried about this that he tried to scry on his own in the hope of receiving guidance as to how to obtain ready cash. He was reproved and mystified by a spirit named Nalvage—the angels seem to have made a habit of indulging in "double-talk" and obscurities when money was mentioned—and this frightened Kelley. Was he scrying on his own because he was reverting to the necromantic practices of his youth? For the spirit Nalvage bore a resemblance to the young King Edward VI, which suggests that Kelley may have been invoking the dead.¹

From the moment the party arrived in Cracow the seances began to take on an altogether different pattern. Kelley increasingly scryed on his own and in doing so he struck out into the more dubious realms of the spirit world which Dee had eschewed. Strange and suspicious invocations were made by Kelley, some of them devised for the purpose of seeking hidden treasure, or so it would seem from the phrasing of them: "This spirit is a familiar spirit and will appear after his first appearance in any secret place as you shall be, eyther in field or town, especially under trees, or in some wood. In the beginning of March, when the Sun entereth with Aries is the best tyme to call first."

It is true that Dee as well as Kelley made use in invocations of such a name as "the most high God Jehova Zaboth, and his great Numerall attribute Neza", but the more suspect and sinister names such as Wyman, Governor of the East, Asoth of the North and Astaroth of the South were never used by Dee. These, in

necromancy, were associated with the spirits of darkness, and yet Kelley referred to them as "Lords of this World" and was quite clearly deviating from the paths of natural magic which Dee had defined clearly. Yet, in fairness to Kelley, it should be made clear that from the context of the invocations, in terms of conventional magic he was working by command rather than compact—that is to say, he was not making any bargains with evil spirits. To the uninitiated this might seem a sophisticated piece of hair-splitting, but in fact from the magical point of view there was a great deal of difference. And it should be remembered that all this time Kelley was a practising Catholic, a bad Catholic, perhaps, but nevertheless still a member of the faith.

Dee, on the other hand, still maintained his more serious and philosophical discussions with the angels and he always took the greatest pleasure in these, though he missed his books of reference in which he could check the relevance of the angelic discourses. Both Nalvage and Gabriel gave Dee some mystical information which Kelley did not understand and this made him angry and impatient. Once more he threatened that he would not scry again and it required all Dee's patience and good will to dissuade him from such a step.

Kelley insisted that Laski had insufficient funds and that they must seek a new patron. His visions of riches and power were already fading. Dee was more cautious and anxious not to offend Laski. Then on 11 June, 1584, Kelley had a vision of wax images being made for the purpose of putting a spell on Laski and he was told by the spirits that "this is the cause that Laski is poor", but that he would nevertheless become King of Poland. If this was intended to impress Laski, it had little effect. A short while afterwards the angels delivered a message to the effect that Laski had been "rejected" because of his sins and lack of repentance and that because of this he had been chastened and reduced to poverty. By this time Laski had had enough of his pair of magicians and was restless at their lack of practical results and completely bored with Dee's pious cross-talk with the angels. He had spent quite considerably out of his own resources in equipping them with a laboratory for alchemical experiments.

It is not quite clear whether it was entirely Laski's idea that Dee and Kelley should visit the Emperor Rudolph II of Bohemia, whose capital was in Prague, as an excuse for getting rid of them. Certainly Laski put forward the proposal and gave them letters of introduction, but the spirits seem to have supported the plan. On 16 August Madimi prophesied that "with this Emperor shall be thy abroad" and ordered Dee to write to him.

Dee had one very good reason for seeking out Rudolph, for the latter was the son of the Emperor Maximilian, to whom he had dedicated his *Monad*.

All this time Kelley was again proving himself a sore affliction to the Dees. Dee wrote that "there happened a great storm or temptation to Edward Kelley of doubting and misliking our instructors and their doings [presumably this was a reference to the angels], and of contemning and condemning anything that I knew or could do. I bare all things patiently for God his sake." Yet in the intervals of his irritable contrariness Kelley could often be contrite and apologetic.

On 3 September, Dee and Kelley, having left their wives and Dee's family behind in Cracow, were received by Rudolph in Prague. The interview was friendly, though the Emperor seemed to take a dislike to Kelley and gave nearly all his attention to Dee. He said he had heard of Dee's fame from the Spanish Ambassador in Prague and commended him on the erudition of his book, *Monad* but added that it was beyond his capacity to understand and stressing somewhat cynically that Dee should confine his attentions only to those things which would be useful to the Emperor. Dee took no notice of this very plain hint and proceeded to harangue Rudolph on the philosophic purpose of his "angelic conversations". It must have been a strange meeting, with a bored Emperor listening moodily to a long tirade and Dee declaiming like a preacher of woe and sparing no punches in telling Rudolph some unpleasant truths about himself.

"The Angel of the Lord has appeared to me," said Dee, "and rebuketh you for your sins. If you will hear me and believe me, you shall triumph. If you will not hear me, the Lord, the God that made Heaven and Earth (under whom you breathe and have

your spirit) putteth down his foot against your breast and will throw you headlong down from your seat. Moreover the Lord has made this covenant with me (by oath) that He will do and perform.

"If you will forsake your wickedness and turn unto Him, your seat shall be the greatest there ever was and the Devil shall become your prisoner."

It was, whatever way one looks at it, either a very valiant, or an extremely impertinent performance on Dee's part, but there can be no denying that it must have required a good deal of courage to berate the Emperor for his sins in his own palace. But though Dee's speech was the thunder and lightning of declamatory prose, he was calm, courteous and even deferential. There was nothing of the uncouthness of John Knox's tirade against Mary, Queen of Scots, in this spontaneous recital by Dee. But it was not an auspicious beginning to their association and Rudolph, an eccentric and erratic man, was no doubt at least irritated by it, if not downright angered, though he seems to have kept his feelings to himself and to have made a civil enough reply. But he committed himself to nothing and when Dee went on to speak of his "angelic conversations", he urged him to defer this until a later date, saying, according to Dee, that "he would henceforward take me to his recommendation and care, and some such words (of favour promised) which I heard not well, he spake so low."

No doubt Rudolph was exhausted by this time and probably Dee, ever an optimist, mistook the inaudible tones for a note of encouragement which Rudolph was far from conceding. When Dee sought a further interview he was told that the Emperor was away hunting and that in future all communications with him must be made through an intermediary, Dr. Kurtz, a member of his Council. It was in effect a polite dismissal.

Dee, unabashed and refusing to be discouraged, did his best to influence Dr. Kurtz and the Spanish Ambassador, but without achieving any worthwhile result. On 28 September he sent the Emperor a letter, saying that it was at the command of the spirits and claiming that he had found the "Philosopher's Stone".

This was followed by another communication to the Spanish Ambassador stating that he had "progressed in incredible mysteries" which he was preparing to reveal to the Emperor alone.

In Prague Dee stayed in the house of a Dr. Hageck, "near the old Rathaus, the greate clock tower". He and Kelley were joined by Kelley's brother, Thomas, and Edmond Hilton, and shortly after this Dee noted in his diary that "Satan is very busy with E.K."

Yet another son was born to Dee at this time and he was given the name of Michael, after the Great Archangel, being baptised in Prague Cathedral when Mrs. Dee was well enough to travel again.

Dee tried hard to interest Dr. Kurtz in his astronomical research, telling him of the "battering glass" he had contrived for taking observations on dark nights. But neither promises of the intellectual benefits which the angels could bestow on him, nor the hints that the powder of projection could produce gold moved Rudolph to any real interest in Dee or Kelley. The Emperor told Dr. Kurtz that he would require positive proof before he could even consider the possibility of gold being manufactured. Dee and Kelley at this time lacked laboratory equipment and Rudolph declined to assist them. The travellers from England were again short of money and even Jane Dee was moved to make a petition of her own to the angels. Dee noted in his diary in the early part of 1585 that "My wife, being in great perplexity, requested E.K. and me that the annexed petition might be propounded to God and his good angels to give answer." Jane's "petition", or prayer, is still among Dee's manuscripts in the British Museum and it reads:

"We desire, God, of his greate and infinite mercies to grant us the helpe of His hevenly mynisters, that we may by them be directed how or by whom to be ayded and released in this necessitie for meate and drinke for us and for our familie, where-with we stand at this instant much oppressed: and the rather because it might be hurtful to us and the credit of the actions wherein we are linked and vowed unto His hevenly Majestie (by the mynistry and comfort of His holy angels) to lay such thinges as are the ornament and our howse and the coveringe of our

bodies in pawne, either unto such as are rebels agaynst his Divine Majestie, the Jewes, or the people of this cytteye, which are malicious and full of wicked slander—I, Jane Dee, humbly acknowledging myselfe His servant and hand-mayden to whom I commit my body and sowle.

“Edward Kelley wrote this for Jane Dee.”

This may have been an attempt on Kelley's part to induce Jane Dee to support the principle of the seances, but from all we know of Jane she must have been desperate indeed to lend herself to any scheme of Kelley's.

Dee and Kelley were not however relying solely on prayer to solve their monetary problems. They sought new patrons. There is a note about a mysterious visit by them both on 27 February, 1585, to Limburg, about six miles from Prague in obedience to some command from Madimi, and this apparently had something to do with Dee having suspected Laski's man, Sontag, of treachery. In April they returned for a short time to Poland and here Laski introduced them to King Stephen. On 27 May a “spiritual conference” was held in the presence of the King, the spirits speaking in Latin, which annoyed Kelley, and it was noticeable that about this time they appear to have made long set speeches in that tongue rather than the swift, cut-and-thrust question and answer which was typical of most of the “angelic conversations”. But the angels used much the same tactics as Dee had done in his tirade to Rudolph; they rebuked the King for his sins, telling him that he was “sunke in his iniquities” and that the hearts of his people were withdrawn from him.

Extreme credulity in the omniscience of the angelic voices, or subtle blackmail against the King? The next day, with Kelley recording his own visions, there is something very like pressure by Kelley on Dee to carry on with the threats and rebukes, for Kelley told Dee that the angels had said: “Thou must answer Stephen, according to the hardness of the heart . . . This done, be not afraid to open thy mouth unto him as thou didst unto Rudolph in writing: Behold, O King, I can make the Philosopher's Stone, for so they call it. Bear thou therefore the charge,

and give me a name within the Court that I may have access unto thee; and yearly maintenance for us both."

This certainly sounded more like the voice of Kelley than of the angels. To sum up: if Stephen failed to listen to this advice, he would be eternally damned. If he accepted it, then the secret of the manufacture of gold was his. Of course, the truth was that neither Dee, nor Kelley had at this time solved the problem of manufacturing gold. So, regardless of any angelic exhortations, they were knowingly deceiving the King. The indications from Dee's own writings are that he hesitated for some time before agreeing to this deceitful conduct, though he took the view that they were so close to discovering the secret that it did not perhaps matter all that much. Stephen, however, was as much of a doubter as Rudolph had been and expressed the view that the whole business smelt of fraudulence.

One could hardly blame him. It is surprising that he did not suspect blackmail as well. Yet, while admitting that Dee's conduct at this time had become devious and on the surface at least dishonest, one cannot just cynically dismiss his machinations as sheer blackmail, any more than one can accept that he was a foolish dupe of the spirits. The picture rather too easily drawn of Dee and Kelley is that they were desperate men in urgent need of money and that they tried to frighten first Rudolph and then Stephen into financing them. If this was the case, surely no man as intelligent as Dee, nor one as cunning as Kelley, would have risked imprisonment, or even death, by rebuking their royal hosts for their sins and more or less openly threatening them. There were easier and subtler methods open to them.

But even if past successes had emboldened them to take such impudent risks, why did Dee, if he was so desperate for money, within a few months of this date turn down a magnificent offer from the Czar of Russia? Why indeed had he on two other occasions rejected other handsome offers from wealthy foreigners? Correspondence with the Russian Court had been continuing for some time, mainly through the intermediary of Thomas Simkinson, a merchant from Hull. Dee must have been sorely tempted to accept, for the terms of the offer were such that neither

Stephen, nor Rudolph could match. Dee was promised an annual salary of £2,000, with many other benefits, including a house, if he would go to Moscow. In fact, negotiations in connection with this proposal had been going on for several weeks before Dee met Stephen.

Nor can it be argued that this offer was a figment of Dee's imagination. There is independent corroboration of the offer in the State Papers, including a declaration by Thomas Simkinson. Apart from the salary Dee was to receive "one thousand markes from Prince Boris" and provisions from the Czar's own table and "to be honourably accounted as one of the chief men in the lande." Milton, in his *History of Moscovia* described the Czar's offer as "the only noteworthy event in Russian history between 1584 and 1604."³

That may well have been an exaggeration, but Dee had always been deeply interested in Russia and the Czar, who had known of his projects for the discovery of a North-east Passage, obviously expected very important developments from employing the Englishman at his Court. Undoubtedly navigational advice and scientific ability were sought by the Czar, but Hakluyt also asserted that the Russian monarch was deeply interested in alchemy. This may well have been true, as some years before the Czar had tried to obtain the services of Bomelius, an astrologer who in 1570 had given warning to Queen Elizabeth's Council of Ministers of plots against the Queen, claiming that these had been revealed to him in a vision.

There have been various conjectures as to why Dee rejected the offer from Russia. Dee's own statement was that he did not wish to serve "a foreign Prince". This may have been so, but why did he deliberately seek to serve Stephen and Rudolph? Another suggestion is that Dee's refusal was urged on him by the angels, with prompting from Kelley who had not been included in the invitation to go to Russia. Yet if Dee had pressed for Kelley to be included, it is unlikely that the Czar would have demurred at the proposal. What seems much more likely is that Dee was discouraged from going by some message from England, possibly from Walsingham.

So the wandering scryers disconsolately left Poland and returned to Prague. The angels seem to have failed to warn them of the dangers of this move for they walked straight into a Court which was seething with hysterical rumours about the "two magicians from England". The Papal Nuncio at Rudolph's Court had brought a message from the Pope that he did not approve of the presence of sorcerers in the Emperor's entourage. Dee and Kelley were accused of conjuring up evil spirits.

The authorities in Prague had taken some time to arrive at these conclusions. They had originally rejected the rumours on the grounds that both Dee and Kelley were practising Christians, that Dee had had his son baptised in the Catholic Cathedral and that Kelley was a Catholic who wished to continue to receive the sacraments of his Church. Also these visitors were not strangers, but were introduced with the highest credentials. Yet the suspicions of two Papal Nuncios had been aroused, not by their own observations so much as by malicious reports which had been circulated. Some of these were based on fact, as it was evident from more recent seances that Kelley had for some time been dabbling in an unorthodox manner with the nether world of the spirits. As far back as 27 June, 1584, Kelley had confessed to Dee that he had been engaged in dealings with evil spirits and he gave a list of the "wicked spirits" he had conjured up, one being "Sindera... he appeareth in many forms, till at length he appear in a triangle of fire and, being constraind to the Circle, he talketh from (as it were) a great Gyant." Dee's name was later erroneously associated with Kelley's secret dabbling in necromancy.

Dee was in fact during this period preparing himself with religious practices for a prolonged exercise in practical Cabbala with Kelley. Any deviation by Kelley from the strictly orthodox path of natural magic caused Dee to seek safety in religion—Protestant or Catholic. In 1585 at Cracow he had met the Hermetist, Hannibal Roselli, and he noted that: "I took ghostly council of Dr. Hannibal the great divine. I received communion at the Bernadines, where the doctor is professor." This in itself

shows that Dee's spiritual path took him in the direction of religious hermetism.

But, unfortunately for Dee, he made friends in this period with another less trustworthy Hermetist, Francesco Pucci. The true purpose of Pucci still remains somewhat of a mystery. A Catholic of liberal opinions, with a keen interest in hermetism and Cabbala, he had travelled widely until eventually he sought sanctuary in Oxford as a convert from the Roman Catholic Church. But he also dabbled in politics and was a Navarrist. In 1585 he went to Prague and re-entered the Catholic Church. He became a close friend of Dee and Kelley, a frequent visitor to the Dee household and attended some of the seances. Outwardly he was extremely friendly towards Dee and his family, but Dee suspected him of being a spy and reported as much in a letter to Walsingham. That Dee's suspicions were to some extent justified is shown by the fact that Pucci, while professing to be a loyal ally, was all the time passing back to the Papal Nuncio in Prague all manner of malicious gossip about the "magicians of England". Pucci was a close friend of the Jesuits in Prague and they had already taken a critical and hostile interest in the activities of Dee and Kelley. Then again Pucci urged Dee to go to Rome and expounded his angelic messages at the Vatican, assuring him that he would be well received. Dee scented a trap and, wisely, declined to go.

Had he followed Pucci's advice he might well have suffered the same fate as the Italian Hermetist. For not even his services as an informer to the Papal authorities, or his re-joining the Church saved Pucci. Perhaps he was a double-agent; at any rate the Vatican eventually became suspicious of him. He was summoned to Rome in 1592, his works were placed on the Index and he was thrown into one of the prisons of the Inquisition. Five years later he was burned at the stake for hermetic and heretical practices.

A recent accidental discovery among the manuscripts of that ardent collector of any scrap of information about Dee, Elias Ashmole, provides an important footnote to the story of Dee's relations with the Papal Nuncio and Kelley's relations with his

Jesuit confessor at this time. This manuscript supplies an important lacuna to Casaubon's *A True Relation* and indeed the latter cannot be accurately interpreted without reference to it.⁴

The minutes of Dee's seances were usually recorded by him in English and later translated into Latin. The minutes of a seance on 10 April, 1586, which were in English, were separated from the volume in which they had just been entered during the seance itself. According to Kelley, the voice of the Holy Spirit commanded Dee to cut out of the book the text of the minutes he was writing. Then Dee and Kelley were told to burn the rest of the volume together with all the other mystical books and papers, including the record of all previous seances.

The account of what followed is hard to swallow even for the most credulous devotee of the occult. The manuscripts were duly burned in a furnace (vouched for only by Kelley and invisible to the others) and then miraculously restored with the exception of a few records. But the excised minutes of the seance of 10 April were not, it seems, reunited with the volume in which they had originally been written. The original English text, which was written by Dee during the seance, is apparently lost. But the question is did Dee write the preface to this seance in Latin so as to provide favourable evidence to the ecclesiastical authorities of their conduct of the angelic conversations? Latin would have been the language the Church authorities would have understood.

At this time Dee must have known that they were in a dangerous situation and that any false move could result in their death. There had been fulsome and seemingly felicitous invitations to them to call on the Papal Nuncio. Then, after the appearance of Pucci on the scene, there had been a brusque command to attend the Nuncio. Something had to be done to put their activities in a more orthodox light and this Dee achieved in a lengthy and repetitive statement that bears all the marks of haste and fear:

"When it was enjoined on me by God Almighty to commit those things to writing which He communicated to us from His immense goodness and most abundant grace, I deemed it my portion to be extremely careful lest by me, or my negligence,

they be offered to the handling or sight of the proud, those without faith, the ungrateful, the envious, the impure or any unworldly person.

"Yet surely we were expressly instructed from the very beginning of our vocation and function . . . to show those mysteries in passing, to relate them compendiously or to show a brief account of an action (as we call it) . . . to the worthy, namely, those who are pious, humble, modest, sincere, conspicuous in Christian charity, enlightened, to those to whom words of divine life and truth are, or may be, a very great consolation, and also sometimes to certain men of another kind. However, without any doubt, when the fullness of its appointed time has run its course, a great many things of which we have received and understood by divine communication and in secret will be published and known, in a most abundant, manifest, complete and effective way . . .

"Yet if any mortal should try to force or by fraud to snatch from our hands those records which are of such great value to us, let him try."

There was this one defiant note, but Dee went on to anticipate that somebody would "dare to assert that we are impostors, that indeed these [records] are fabricated by us" and that because of this he and Kelley would be deemed "pernicious citizens in the Christian Polity". At the best he feared they would be regarded as over credulous, or "doting folks who have been drawn into error by some very astute evil spirit making game over us many years."

Dee's apologia ended with a sentence of saccharine prose in which he declaimed: "And hence all pious and genuine sons of the Catholic Church itself will own the efficacy and the diaphoretic celestial energy of our Illuminator and Comforter show he instills, or rather pours out most copiously, His very sweet, very salubrious and most consolating liquor into the marrow of their bones, yea, even unto the remoter recesses of their souls."

All this seems to prove conclusively that in the case of the manuscript burned in the furnace and then miraculously restored, either Dee was fooled by Kelley, or the two together were concocting an elaborate story to baffle the ecclesiastical authorities, playing for time while the latter tried to unravel the

complexities of their defence. This may have gained them time and saved them from a worse fate, but it did not win them a reprieve. On 6 May, 1586, Dee was told that the Papal Nuncio had submitted to the Emperor a document in which Dee was accused of necromancy and other forbidden practices. It was clear that Pope Sixtus V had tried to get the Emperor to extradite them and send them to Rome. When this ruse failed, Pucci tried to persuade them to go to Rome of their own accord.

There followed an interval of several days of uncertainty. Then on 30 May Dee received an imperial decree ordering him, his family and Kelley to be expelled from the kingdom within six days.

MADIMI ORDERS THE SHARING OF WIVES

DEE AND his party lost no time in leaving Prague, but their moves during the next month or so are for the most part unknown and after their expulsion from the Emperor's Court there are many gaps in Dee's narratives. They stayed for short periods at Enfurt, Gotha and Cassel and on 14 September Dee recorded that they arrived in Trebona.

It was fortunate indeed that Dee took the expulsion order so seriously and made no attempt to argue his case further. They left within twenty-four hours and had they remained longer even the six days of grace would have been meaningless. For the Papal Nuncio had received orders to imprison them in a dungeon.

That they suffered from lack of funds for several weeks is evident, but they appear to have done their best to hide their poverty from the outside world and to maintain outwardly a semblance of dignified living. What funds they had received from Laski and others had long since disappeared, but they earned a modest amount by astrological readings and casting horoscopes.

Various accounts have been given of what Dee and Kelley did in this period, but frequently these prove to be inaccurate interpretations of the writings of both men and a juxtaposition of events in the wrong sequence through fitting facts into gaps in Dee's narratives. It is, for example, suggested that they again made contact with both Laski and King Stephen, but some of the accounts of what transpired are obviously pure guesswork. At some time or other, but the date must remain uncertain, they

again tried to interest King Stephen in their scrying and told him that the Emperor Rudolph was shortly to be assassinated and that he would be the new sovereign of Germany.

Eventually they found a new patron in Count Wilhelm Rosenberg, Viceroy of Bohemia, who invited them to his palace in Trebona in South Bohemia. Here Dee was soon noting with evident satisfaction that there was "a goodly chapel next my chamber", where the scrying was resumed. Rosenberg was immensely wealthy and generous with his money. He swiftly became interested in the experiments of the two Englishmen, both in the "angelic conversations" and the manufacture of gold. Rosenberg also managed to have the decree of banishment at least partially revoked, at any rate to the extent of their being able to live safely and legally within his province.

The Czar of Russia was evidently still anxious to obtain Dee's services, for on 8 December Dee wrote that "abowt none Mr. Edward Garland cam to Trebona to mee from the Emperor of Moschovia, according to the articles before sent unto me by Thomas Hankinson."¹

Kelley was now enthusiastically in favour of their devoting all their time to alchemical experiments. Dee wrote on 19 December that "...E.K. *fecit proleolem lapidis in proportionie unius... gravi arenae super quod vulgaris oz. et $\frac{1}{2}$ et producta est optimi auri oz. fere: quod post distribuimus a crucibolo una dedimus Edourado.*"²

Rosenberg's interest in these experiments for the manufacture of gold does not seem to have been for avaricious motives; he had wealth enough. In some mystical way—and here there is a hint of the original Rosicrucian doctrine, or something very like it—he associated the "Philosopher's Stone", the manufacture of gold and the elixir of life with a means for prolonging human life. Rosenberg in fact was much nearer to being a Rosicrucian than was Dee.

Kelley made the most of this opportunity to expound on the wonders of his powder of projection. But if he was the more enthusiastic in pursuit of the manufacture of gold, Dee may have looked upon it as a possible solution to his financial difficulties

and as paving the way to still more important quests. But there are insufficient grounds for inferring, as did some of his critics, that Dee was obsessed by the old alchemical ambitions of finding the "Philosopher's Stone" and the Elixir of Life. Nor indeed is there any basis for Dame Edith Sitwell's assertion that "Dee was the principal alchemist in England."³

Nevertheless the Dee household must have been full of talk about the project for manufacturing gold. John Aubrey wrote that "Arthur Dee, his sonne, a physician at Norwich, and intimate friend of Sir Thomas Browne, told Mr. Bathurst that (being but a boy) he was used to play at quoits with the plates of gold made by projection in the garret of Dr. Dee's lodgings in Prague." Here possibly Arthur Dee was mistaken: the garret was probably in Trebona.

Kelley has been given the credit for progressing furthest towards the manufacture of gold, but the evidence suggests that it was Dee who worked out the mathematical calculations which paved the way to creating a bogus form of gold. The story of the spectacular experiment on the warming-pan has often been told and there are various versions of it, giving the credit sometimes to Dee, more often to Kelley. It would seem that they both worked on this and that while Dee probably stumbled across the secret of plating by what today would be called the electro-process, Kelley carried the experiments much further and exploited the results to the fullest extent. The best near contemporary account of this is in the Ashmole Manuscripts: "On the continent Kelley annointed a warming pan belonging to a Mr. Willoughby with a certain oil which changed a portion of the lid to gold. This piece was cut out [an operation which could surely only serve to cast doubt on the fact] and, with the pan, sent to Elizabeth, who, observing the perfect fit of the gold plate into the hole in the lid, was thus convinced of Kelley's powers."⁴

Dee wrote to Walsingham about his "moste exciting discoveries" and fully acknowledged Kelley's part in their experiments. But Kelley was now so absorbed by his quest for a formula for manufacturing gold on a large scale that he wanted to give up scrying and devote all his time to the new project.

This again led to disputes between the two men. Kelley had never been interested in the didactic aspects of the "angelic conversations" and now he regarded them as mere time-wasting when so much more could be achieved by transmutation.

There were more visitors to Dee about this period. In January he mentioned meeting Nicholas du Haut, a Frenchman from Lorraine, who had been a servant to Dee's friend, Otho Henrick, Duke of Brunswick. Du Haut came "to seek a service, being dismissed by passport from his Lord after his long sickness."

The alchemical experiments seem to have produced both presents and cash, and from Dee's diary it would seem that Kelley was the more successful in obtaining these. It was, Dee noted, Kelley who "brought with him from the Lord Rosenberg to my wife a chain and jewel estimated at 300 ducats." Kelley, too, seems to have been able to get the banishment decree lifted so far as visits to Prague were concerned for on 21 January, 1587, he paid a visit to that city. On his return Dee recorded in his diary on 7 March that "E.K. gives us 300 ducats" and on 21 March that he "gave me 170 more."

There are indications that for some time Dee and Kelley had been following separate paths and jealousy on the part of Kelley and mistrust on that of Dee caused acute friction between them. Kelley still on occasions threatened to leave his master and fend for himself and Dee expressed his dislike of Kelley's methods and chicanery. The extent of Dee's participation in the "angelic conferences" at this time is by no means clear. Many of the records are missing; either they were destroyed or not kept. Some of the manuscripts detailing their activities do not appear to have been in Dee's handwriting, especially those rather obscurely referring to what seem to be attempts to discover buried treasure, using the spirits for guidance. There was one seance at which several people were present, probably including Rosenberg, in which reference was made to "severall great flashes of fire one after another . . . and betwixt everie flash a blaze as blew as steele, and damnable stinck of brimstone issued from thence, as was ready to choke us all."

But, again, one cannot be sure that this record was in Dee's

writing. Nor can one be sure that the information on the Philosopher's Stone so obligingly provided by the angels was noted by Dee. But, if one interprets some of these records in the light of the difference of opinion between the two men, one gets the impression that whereas Kelley's approach was purely alchemical, Dee was attempting to divert Kelley from such a purpose and to allegorise the Philosopher's Stone into a symbol of Christ. Some Christian mystics had already done this. When a spirit appeared wearing jewellery and asked the scryers if they thought she was a jeweller's wife, Dee replied that they looked upon her as "the messenger of Him who had purchased the jewel of eternal bliss by the jewel of his precious blood."

In April, 1587, Kelley emphatically announced that he was going to do no more scrying and in future he would devote all his time to alchemy. He advised Dee to find another scryer. Dee remonstrated with him and even argued that the angelic voices had told Kelley that his gift of clairvoyance was worth more than any worldly treasure. But Kelley was obdurate and suggested that Dee should try to get his young son Arthur to gaze into the crystal.

There was a precedent for using a boy as a scryer. Some of the ancients had believed that youths were more efficient than mature men in this art and Kelley cited the case of Apuleus who had recommended the employment of a "young and innocent boy for divining purposes" and had described how such a youth, gazing at an image of Mercury reflected in a bowl of water, had foretold the future in one hundred and sixty lines of verse.

Arthur Dee was about eight years old at the time and a most reluctant scryer he proved to be. Tearfully, sadly and bewildered, he concentrated his gaze on the shew-stone, but all to no avail. While his father prayed for his consecration as a scryer, the childish eyes saw nothing. Urged to be patient and to wait until the visions came, Arthur Dee saw "squares and pricks", upon which Dee commented in his diary : "I doubted it was something of the glas itselfe, as there were in it certain white spots." After a time Arthur claimed to see the letter "A" and some lions, then two old men with black beards and with golden crowns on

their heads. Perhaps he was inventing the visions, or more probably he was suffering from hallucinations, for finally he fainted and was sick. Dee took compassion on his son and no further attempts were made to use him as a scryer.

The failure of Arthur was the signal for Kelley to return to the scrying chamber. At any rate Kelley made what appeared to be the magnanimous gesture of offering to gaze into the shew-stone and claimed to see in it the spirits which had failed to manifest themselves to the child. But he professed himself reluctant to reveal what exactly the spirits had told him. In fact, he told Dee that he had been very disturbed in recent months by some of the revelations of the spirits and it was as much for this reason as for any ulterior purpose that he had asked to be excused from further scrying. Now that he had again gazed into the crystal he was even more disturbed by what he saw and heard and he begged Dee not to press him to narrate these happenings.

Dee, not unnaturally, insisted that it was his duty to tell all and hide nothing. Kelley said that what he had heard was shocking and shameful and that Dee would be grieved to hear it. According to Kelley Madimi had appeared in the crystal and discarded her clothes one by one until she was completely naked. Just as she had revealed all her innermost "mysteries" to them, so, she said, they must reveal and share all things with one another. Kelley pretended not to understand what was meant by this command, but after some hesitation and following prompting from Dee, he said that Madimi and the spirit, Ill, were persistently counselling them to "share all things in common and all things are to be in common between us, including our wives."

Kelley added that the seriousness of this counsel could not be doubted: it was a positive command and had been conveyed by the spirits both inside and outside of the crystal. What was more they had conveyed this message both by words and dumb show and Uriel, the spirit of Light and the angel of God, had appeared and repeated the same instructions.

Dee fiercely rebuked Madimi, saying: "Such words are unmeet

for any Godly creature to use. Are the commandments of God to be broken?"

Dee then insisted to Kelley that if this really was a divine revelation it could only be meant in a "Christian or Godly sense", in short that it must mean that each was to share the tribulations and the joys of the other, that each man and each wife was to share what material things they had in common.

No, replied Kelley, this was not the angels' intention. He had questioned Madimi and it was quite clear that the sharing of their wives was to be on a physical and not merely a spiritual basis. This was the will of God. He was as much horrified by the revelation as Dee, he claimed, and it was for this reason that he had wanted to give up scrying and to deal no more with the spirits. He had tried to shield Dee from such terrible tidings, but Dee would not listen to him. Now neither of them could escape from this terrible dilemma.

Whatever Kelley may then have professed, there can be no denying that ever since he had been on the continent he had been reporting complaints from the spirits that he had married the wrong woman against their commandments. When one bears in mind that Kelley had claimed that the angels had originally urged him to marry when he himself was against the idea, this change in angelic opinion seems extremely suspicious. Kelley had, in fact, quite often praised Jane Dee and compared his own wife unfavourably with her. Then again he had given Jane Dee the chain and jewel, though he had given Dee to understand that this was a present from Rosenberg. Now Kelley said that his wife was barren and that this was solely because he had taken his wife without first obtaining the approval of the spirits. The only way to remove this curse was by "cross-matching"—in other words by exchanging wives. The idea was wholly repellent to him and he strongly resented the command and shared Dee's horror at the prospect of anything so horrible.

Madimi then displayed herself not merely as a brazen little hussy, very different from the sweet and playful child who had originally appeared to Dee and Kelley, but sneered at them for their coyness and disbelief in such a proposal. "You are fools of

little understanding," she declaimed. Not content to listen to her commands, were they, she asked imperiously, going to set themselves up as "Lord, Gods, Judges of the Heavens? Your own reason riseth up against my wisdom. Behold you are free. Do that which most pleaseth you."

Dee protested in vain, arguing now with Madimi, then with Kelley. He wrote: "Hereupon we were in great amasement and grief of minde that so hard and (as it yet seemed to me) so impure a doctrine was pounded and enjoined unto us, of them whom I alwayes (from the beginning hitherto) did judge and esteem undoubtedly to be good angells." Then followed a passage which indicates that Dee must have known something of Kelley's past dealings in necromancy before he came to Mortlake, for he reminded the angels that it had been his "life's work" to withdraw Kelley from any kind of association with "bad spirits who had frequented him before he came to me."

The two men sat up until two in the morning arguing about what they should do. Kelley indulged in a somewhat obscure form of psychological warfare. He spoke of "a little spirit, Ben", who had appeared to him that day in his laboratory when he was alone. Ben had shown him how to distil oil from "spirit of wine" over a retort in two silver dishes, "whelmed one uppon another with a hole through the middle and a sponge between them in which the oil would remain." Ben had told him that Queen Elizabeth would die in July, that the King of Spain and the Pope would die shortly, that Francis Garland (a frequent visitor to Dee from England) was a spy sent by Burghley to report on their doings, that Rosenberg would shortly be poisoned and that famine, bloodshed and other dire calamities would overcome them, if they did not conform to divine instructions.

Ben, said Kelley, was to be trusted, because he had led him to his precious projection powder, and that would be taken from him and he would be reduced to penury, if he disobeyed the commands.

Dee seems to have seen through this subtle propaganda, for he replied that he had found so much untruth in Kelley's reports of seances, when he was not present, that he would believe nothing

except what could be proved to be true. Kelley then appeared to change his tactics, for he asserted that he found it harder than Dee to reconcile himself to the angelic commands, that whereas Dee could always understand the divine mysteries, he himself lacked the erudition to grasp the full meaning of the angelic messages.

This probably had more effect on Dee than the threats of Ben, for slowly his resistance to the idea of "cross-matching" was overcome. He went to bed, deeply worried and perplexed, to find his wife still awake and obviously conscious that something was amiss. Ill at ease, not knowing how to tell her about the proposal, he stammered out the story of the angelic command. "'Jane,' I said," he wrote in his book, "'I can see that there is no other remedy, but as hath been said, of our cross-matching, so it must need be.'"

Jane Dee was no less horrified than her husband. She "fell aweeping and trembling for full a quarter of an hour, then burst forth into a fury of anger." She implored Dee never to leave her. "I trust," she said, "that though I finde myself thus to be used that God will turn me into a stone before he would suffer me in my obedience to receive any shame or inconvenience." Further she said she would eat "neither fish, nor flesh" until "this action, so contrary to the wholesome law of God, and so different from former actions which had often comforted her, was confirmed."

What Jane Dee wanted was a further confrontation with the spirits to see whether the divine command was upheld, or whether it had been the result of an evil spirit masquerading as a good one.

Apparently there was no sign by the angels that any mistake had been made. Consequently a document was drawn up—probably on 21 April—and not ratified and signed by the four partners, Dee, Kelley and their respective wives, until 3 May, 1587. It was an extraordinary document of self-delusion, swearing blind obedience to the angelic commands, with secrecy upon pain of death to any of the four. "I, John Dee, Edward Kelley, and our two wives, covenanted with God and subscribed the same, for indissoluble and inviolable unities, charity and friendship

keeping between us four, and all things between us to be common, as God by sundry means willed us to do."

The whole of the "angelic conversations" relating to this "cross-matching" proposal, which was what Dee called it, sounds much more like the conspiracies of Kelley than of anything else that came out of the seances. The phrasing of the commands, the process of thought which lay behind them is entirely that of Kelley. Sex rites had in the past formed a feature of spiritualist experiments just as they did in those of Crowley and Neuberg. But there had never been anything like this in Dee's experiments and the idea of invoking spirits through either heterosexual or homosexual rites had never occurred to him. Yet through the ages, and especially among the black magicians, there had been this theory that a sex rite, or sacrifice, in some way brought the scryer into contact with the spirit world. Crowley recorded a curious discourse from the lips of Jupiter himself which proclaimed that "in this death-like trance [what the occultists called *eroto-comatose lucidity*] the spirit becomes free to wander, and is united to the invoked god."⁵

But can this sexual approach to the spirit world (for which there is a parallel in the Moslem idea of an orgasm as a momentary, blissful association with the joys of eternity) be related to Kelley's thought processes? Did he believe that by wife swapping he could improve his scrying? This does not make sense if one accepts Kelley's continual insistence over the months, even over the years, that he wanted to discontinue scrying and that it was not worth the effort. Or was it that Kelley was unscrupulously playing on Dee's credibility in a sordid attempt to make an excuse for sleeping with his wife? It is not difficult to draw the conclusion that Kelley coveted Jane Dee and, knowing that her virtue could not be overcome by any other method, he invented this elaborate ritual. Unfortunately the subsequent narratives of this experiment do not clear up the mystery; perhaps the whole business was so painful that Dee could not bring himself to write about it. On the other hand shame may have caused him to destroy the records.

It would seem that Dee in his hesitation about putting the

exchange of wives into practice turned to various works of reference, mainly ecclesiastical and that he believed there was part of the Augustinian doctrine which laid down that actions which would normally be regarded as wrong and reprehensible could be approved if warranted by God. This seemed to weigh with him when he finally made his decision. Even in the covenant the four partners asked that this "last mystical admonishment be not impelled to them for rashness, presumption or wanton lust." If Dee was reluctant to enter into this covenant, there can be no denying that in this case the hand-writing is unquestionably his and that he undertook the planning of the petition. The language is just as positively that of Dee and it is fairly clear that he regarded it as only a symbol of spiritual union which would enable him to obtain a closer understanding of the secrets of the universe. He did even give a hint that a complete, that is a physical implementation of the pledge to share wives, might not be necessary. It did not matter to him, he said, if the women were "imperfectly obedient . . . if it offended not God, it offendeth not mee, and I pray God it did not offend Him."

It might be argued that Dee, who was now sixty, had reached the age when sexual desire was dimmed and that in fact that physical implications of the wife-sharing held no attraction for him. But Dee was still raising a family and another son, Theodore, was born to Jane in February of the following year. Cynics might say Theodore was the fruit of exchanging partners and that the younger man, Kelley, had cuckolded him. But Dee produced other children after this date when the wife-swapping had been discontinued.

Curiously, when it came to the crucial moment for the covenant to be signed and the partners to be exchanged, it was Kelley who drew back, whether from sheer hypocrisy, or fear can only be surmised. It could have been a sly attempt to persuade Jane Dee that he was even more reluctant than her husband to enter into this bargain. Tactically, he seemed to imply that this was the case when he commented to Jane that "my heart pales at the arrangement, but your husband is made of sterner stuff. He is persuaded it is right." Jane had clearly indicated her revulsion at

the prospect of having Kelley as a bed-mate and had equally firmly shown that she thought he had engineered the scheme. So Kelley may have felt that the only way he could redeem himself was by some last minute play-acting. He told Dee, his wife and Jane that he did not believe "so damnable a doctrine" would be commanded and, trying to pin the blame on Dee, cunningly insisted that he had on countless occasions urged his master not to indulge in further scrying in case it led to some disaster such as this.

However, having gone so far, Dee would not turn back. Probably Kelley knew this, for he had an unerring instinct about the workings of Dee's mind. Yet Dee may not altogether have lacked cunning. It seems possible that both he and Jane may even have hoodwinked Kelley by coming to some mutual arrangement by which each lured him into an arrangement which was rigidly platonic. On 6 May Dee laid the document of their covenant on the south table of the chapel in Rosenberg's palace and then offered up many prayers for divine guidance as to what they should do next. But what happened after this? The only piece of evidence is from Kelley and it is so bizarre as to be farcical. The following day he took the document, cut it into tiny pieces and destroyed it and then disappeared with one of the crystals used for scrying. Whether this was one of the many crystals they possessed, or the chief shew-stone, is not stated, but it was eventually found under Jane Dee's pillow. Did Kelley put it there, or had Jane Dee hidden it behind the pillow to stop Kelley from further scrying and obtaining more erotic instructions from the angels? Who was fooling whom?

There are no records of how the experiment in wife-sharing fared. One can certainly conclude that it was unsuccessful and one can hazard a guess that it was never carried to the extent of actually exchanging bed partners. Kelley became even more neurotic, threatened to leave the Dee household more than once and turned away from the others to concentrate on his alchemy. Various writers have suggested that the "sharing of wives" caused jealousy and enmity between the four of them, but this is based on no concrete evidence. Quarrels there were, but these were due

to the same reasons as previously, disputes between Dee and Kelley about their work.

Mr. C. A. Burland in his recent work, *The Arts of the Alchemists*, finds a psychological motive in the agreement to share their wives. "They were integrating their *anima* concepts at the same time," he wrote. "It may have expressed the alchemical ideas of the *Soror Mystica* and it may well have been that this was the reason behind the overt drawing up of an agreement."

The most significant fact that emerged from the "cross-matching" was that it marked the end of the scrying. Madimi made her last appearance to Dee and Kelley in May, 1587. After that the "angelic conversations" ceased, or at least there was no record of any more until twenty years later. Dee's *Liber Mysteriorum* was closed.

Yet surely, as far as Dee was concerned, his sole purpose in indulging in an experiment about which he had the gravest moral doubts quite apart from a personal distaste, was that it would please the angels and enable them to reveal to him those innermost secrets of the universe he had always sought? But the excuse ultimately given by Dee was that the non-appearance of the angels was that they were so displeased at the exchange of partners that they declined to reveal themselves any longer. Why should Dee believe this when his carefully drawn up covenant made it abundantly clear that he accepted the exchange of partners only because it had been divinely dictated to them? Did he change his mind after having convinced himself that Kelley was deceiving him with bogus messages? Or was Kelley (if he had been practising deceit) afraid of consulting the angels for fear of their wrath?

One could go on asking questions on this subject and perhaps get no nearer an answer. It is wiser to keep to facts rather than to speculate. And the facts suggest that there was no more than an uneasy, platonic relationship between the men and the women. Whatever may have been Kelley's intentions, his subsequent behaviour suggests that he made no progress towards taking Mrs. Dee to bed and that he was probably impotent into the bargain. His tempers, his shutting himself up in the laboratory for days

at a stretch and the fact that he twice started to leave the Dee household indicate failure of anything approaching satisfactory relations with Jane.

The whole affair came mysteriously to an end on 19 July, when Dee wrote in his diary: "A certayn kinde of recommendation between our wives. Next day saw relenting of E.K., also by my Lord's entreaty."

IN VENERIS SACER
 NOBIS



Est Veneris a Superiori mihi datum nomen. in l.
 Encola mox Veneris dūm Tuba cantor adest
 Subditus Ca. Pemon Veneris virtute gemiscit
 Enge! animi mactius victor ab hoste redire.

A manuscript page from Dee's *Tuba Veneris*, a ritual for invoking the goddess Venus

STRANGE METHODS OF ESPIONAGE

UP TO DATE the story of John Dee's life has been told mainly through his own diaries and writings and supplemented by other contemporary factual sources. This has not been difficult as his whole life is, in the main, fairly carefully charted and documented. For an Elizabethan who held no great position of State, the broad outline of the career of John Dee is remarkably well recorded. There are, it is true, certain gaps in the narrative of his career, but they are far fewer than those of another contemporary secret agent of England, Christopher Marlowe.

It is when one comes to interpret Dee that the task becomes difficult. So far it has been relatively easy to show that he was not the charlatan portrayed by so many and that his intellectual researches were abstruse rather than unorthodox, mystical rather than eccentric, scientific rather than magical. It is only when one comes to examine the detail and the elaboration of the "angelic conversations" that the problem of interpretation becomes difficult.

For in these spiritual exercises the enigma of Dee is wrapped up in dilemma of Kelley. To understand the one, it is necessary to resolve the puzzle of the other. Where Dee was consistently religious and intellectual, Kelley so often is fascinated by the demonic and desperate for material success. Most writers have taken the easy way in attempting to interpret Dee: either they depict him as the ingenuous and foolish dupe of Kelley, or they

seek to show that he was just as devious, greedy and unscrupulous as his scryer.

Yet the truth is that neither of these interpretations makes sense in relation to all Dee's other activities and, indeed, the rest of his career. His diary clearly reveals that he was always mistrustful of Kelley and certainly fully aware of all the serious defects in Kelley's character, while the portrait of a subtle, scheming rogue in Poland and Germany does not match up with the frequent glimpses one has of a man who patriotically rejected offers of riches from France, Russia and elsewhere. But above all the machinations of Dee and Kelley in their dealings with the spirit world do not easily make sense either in terms of Renaissance magic, or the declared principles of Dee.

Some might be tempted to make a third facile, but more charitable explanation of Dee's conduct—that his dabbling in spiritualism filled him with megalomania and unhinged his mind. The various experts who have contributed to the notes on Dee in the *Dictionary of National Biography* seem to have anticipated this verdict and rejected it, for here the comment is made that the "angelic conferences are such a tissue of blasphemy and absurdity that they might suggest insanity which, however, there is no other ground to suspect."

Robert Hooke, half a century later, gave his own opinion in an address to the Royal Society. Referring to Casaubon's book about the "angelic conversations", he declared that "whatever may seem rational to others to judge of the same book, to me, I confess, it seems to be designed to comprehend another meaning than what is plainly legible in the words of it, which possibly many others that have read it, may have no suspicion of: neither may they have ever seen, or considered the Cryptography of Trithemius, or any other either on the like subjects.

"The greater part of the book—especially all that which relates to the Spirits and Apparitions, together with names, speeches, clothing, prayers, etc., are all cryptography, and . . . some parts also of that which seems to be a Journal of his Voyages and Travels into several parts of Germany are also cryptographical—that is, under those feigned stories, he hath concealed relations

of quite another thing and that he [Dee] made use of this way of absconding it that he might more securely escape discovery, if he should fall under suspicion as to the true designs of his travels, or that the name should fall into the hands of any spies as such might betray him or his intentions."¹

Hooke rejected the theory that Dee was made penniless as a result of his obsession with crystal-gazing preventing him from earning a living. He pointed out that on his return to England, when Dee was supposed to be destitute, he gave the Landgrave of Hesse in Germany twelve Hungarian horses—not the kind of present a man even of moderate means could afford. And again, after his return to England, despite the fact that his laboratory had been destroyed and his library looted, he paid for a new gallery to be built in Mortlake Church.

Hooke also thought that, despite the quarrels between Dee and Kelley, there was always a close, secret arrangement which bound them together and which took precedence over personal animosities. As proof of this he referred to the correspondence between them in later years when they were far apart and even after their final quarrel. This strange alliance between two men so different in temperament and principles, whose relations were constantly upset by deceit and double-dealing, could only have been the result of a discipline imposed on them by somebody higher up. That somebody, Hooke thought, was the head of the English Intelligence service. Further he gave it as his view that the "angelic noises" were "faked by mechanical means", a technique that "had been done by Roger Bacon and the 'Echoing Head'."²

"The *Book of Enoch* was only for cryptographic use. . . . The method was so like Trithemius that it could be transcribed by analogy thereto. There are many plain instances of cryptography."

This was the theme which Robert Hooke developed and, apart from being a scientist of high repute in his day, he was also an authority on cryptography. Although simple codes, mainly numerical, were in use in English Intelligence circles in Elizabethan times, no clear definition of the requirement of cryptography was made until Francis Bacon touched on the subject in his *The Advancement of Learning* (1605). Then Bacon defined the

requisites of a good cipher as being threefold: (1) that it should be easy to read and write; (2) it should be difficult to detect; (3) it should be void of suspicion, that is, that a stranger should not think it looked like a secret message. In his own bilateral cipher Bacon showed how the letters "a" and "b" could be made to do duty for the whole alphabet by various methods of combining them.

It is already clear from earlier evidence that Dee both understood and used some of the simple codes known to Walsingham and others. He was also made fully aware that the crude and somewhat obvious methods of sending secret messages in Elizabethan days were highly dangerous and easy to detect. His informants were scattered all over the world and he needed some reasonably fool-proof method of transmitting messages in a manner that nobody would suspect. The "angelic conversations" and the Enochian alphabet could have provided an ingenious, if complicated, method of achieving this.

Yet those writers who tend to ignore, or to minimise the importance of Dee's work as a secret agent, point to the spiritual experiments as the most potent argument against his being an effective Intelligence worker. They claim that he was too absorbed by this work to devote any time to espionage and that in any event his obsession with magic would mark him down as too suspicious a character to be able to undertake secret work efficiently and without arousing the watchfulness of his enemies.

Yet what better cover could he have had than that of an astrologer and a scryer? It would be nonsense to suggest that all the conversations with the spirits were political Intelligence couched in ciphers, but a close examination of some of them reveals that the jargon of Enochian could have been an ideal medium for use as a secret cipher on occasions. And if one accepts this thesis, then the apparent contradictions in his behaviour and actions begin to make sense. What superficially seems to be chicanery and deceit and downright fraud suddenly falls into perspective as the natural attitudes of the Intelligence man.

To return to Hooke's theory: "there are many plain instances of cryptography," he says again, "both by changing and putting

some letters for others and numbers for letters and numbers also for words and tables for disposing or placing letters according to several orders and methods to be seen in the book itself.”³

Dee's cryptographical purposes we will examine later, but it is as well not to lose sight of the fact that the “angelic conversations” provided him with a variety of methods in espionage. In the first place he undoubtedly used astrology and crystal-gazing as a form of psychological warfare. Thus in Elizabethan days he developed a side-line of espionage which was known and understood by the ancient world, but not fully appreciated by Intelligence circles until World War II. Then astrology was recognised by official Intelligence organisations as a powerful weapon. Louis de Wohl, an Hungarian-born astrologer, who before the outbreak of war escaped from the Nazis to come to England, was made a captain in the British Army's Department of Psychological Warfare. He had to fight one of the strangest battles of the war—forecasting Hitler's intuitions and what he was likely to do next. De Wohl knew that Hitler believed in what the stars predicted and that he paid attention to the astrologers. De Wohl's job was to study Hitler's horoscope and send reports on it to the War Office. Rudolf Hess also consulted various astrologers and there is evidence that his choice of 10 May 1941 as the date for his flight to Scotland was based on the advice given by one of them, Ernst Schulte-Strathaus.

“I had learned the technique of Karl Klafft, Hitler's favourite astrologer. I knew what his advice to Hitler would be long before he was even summoned by the Fuhrer.”⁴

Thus it was to some extent possible to forecast what Hitler's moves would be. To what extent Dee used his own astrological predictions for espionage in a direct sense one cannot be sure. All we know is that he was consulted both by the Queen and by Walsingham on these matters and that his reports were considered valuable. It is certain that he sought positive guidance from the spirit world on intelligence matters—on the Armada, on the future prospects of Mary, Queen of Scots and a variety of other subjects. He may also have used his knowledge of Elizabeth's enemies' horoscopes to determine how they would be

likely to act. This was true in the case of Philip of Spain. Where, however, he gave a new twist to the techniques of espionage was in using the "spiritual conversations" to influence the actions of other people, and trapping them into revealing their intentions.

The clearest example of this was in his dealings with Laski in London. He invited Laski to address questions to the spirits; those questions told Dee all he needed to know about Laski's hopes and intentions. Having achieved this much, it would then be a simple matter for Dee to influence Laski's decisions by giving him instructions which purported to come from the spirits. The same technique was used in Poland and elsewhere. These were daring shock tactics, classical examples of clever psychological warfare, especially the lengthy diatribe by Dee launched against King Stephen, warning him of his unpopularity and the dire troubles which would beset him as a result of his misdeeds unless he listened to the spiritual advice.

These tactics must have required consummate skill and courage. They cannot be explained away as an attempt to frighten King Stephen into giving Dee and Kelley all the money they required. The element of danger in the whole business was such that only a brave and patriotic secret agent would court. A rascal would not have risked his life for dubious gains; he would have been much more likely to try flattery.

One has only to compare the narratives of the "angelic conversations" when Dee and Kelley were scrying alone with those when they were scrying with others to note certain subtle differences. When Dee and Kelley scried alone, the spiritual conferences were in the main didactic and almost entirely aimed at obtaining philosophical information, except for occasional diversions. If Kelley ever sought to use the seances for his own purposes, he was usually swiftly rebuked by Dee. But when Laski, Stephen or Rosenberg were involved, the proceedings were quite different. There was some spiritual probing after the secrets of the universe—probably enough to make it seem that this was Dee's main purpose—but the questions and answers between scryer and angels formed quite a different pattern, that of probing for information on purely secular matters.

There has been a link between occultism and Intelligence work throughout the ages. Fondness for secrecy would naturally draw those practising the occult into Intelligence work, but apart from this the power of interrogation which scrying gave men was in itself an asset in Intelligence work, fully appreciated as much in modern times as in the past. But various factors account for the co-operation of occultists in Intelligence. First, there is the occultist's sense of power and superiority, his feeling of prescience which leads him to believe that in time of war or international unrest he can help the authorities. Second, there is the occultist's love of mystery and pulling the strings behind the scenes. Third, there is the curious fact that the occultist has a sixth sense for detecting and drawing to him people who are employed in espionage. Finally, the occultist has either been persecuted by authority in the past, or is liable to be suspected by authority in time of war: this has tended to make him seek the protection of authority by offering a *quid pro quo*.

It is still valid to draw parallels between Elizabethan times and events in recent years. We have already noted that Himmler regarded the Rosicrucians as a branch of British Intelligence. In fact, though this was an inaccurate thesis, the Rosicrucians individually, but not collectively, have during the centuries been mixed up in espionage. Saint Germain, an eighteenth-century Rosicrucian, was an Intelligence agent, and, ironically, up to the time of the 1914-18 War there was evidence that leading Rosicrucians were aiding German Intelligence, a fact that Himmler seems to have forgotten. The O.T.O. Temple in London, to which Aleister Crowley belonged, was closed down by the police, mainly on the grounds that the international head of this Rosicrucian Order was a German secret agent. Even Crowley himself dabbled in espionage and during the First World War indulged in pro-German propaganda for the Germans. Yet it may have been Crowley who was partly responsible for Himmler believing in the myth of the Rosicrucians and the British Secret Service, for, though Crowley was nearly prosecuted after the war for aiding the enemy, in fact he always claimed that he posed as pro-German in order to spy on them. The American Intelligence

seem to have accepted Crowley's story as genuine, whereas the British Naval Intelligence turned him down in World War I. Military Intelligence, however, took Crowley rather more seriously and between the two wars he supplied a certain amount of information on international communism and continental secret societies.

Crowley was, of course, a rascal and may well have been a double agent for pecuniary reasons. In many respects he resembled Kelley. While Kelley peddled the "Philosopher's Stone", Crowley peddled the bogey of communism and secret societies, and Intelligence circles were just as gullible about his reports as were the Middle European princes for whom Kelley promised the manufacture of vast supplies of gold. Like Kelley, Crowley realised that the bigger the boast the better the chance of its being believed. He always claimed that he persuaded British Intelligence to adopt the V sign which Churchill made so famous. If so, Crowley's tongue must have been deep in his cheek, for the V sign in occult circles is the Satanic (destructive or averse) sign of Apohis and Tiphon.

In assessing the activities of Dee and Kelley, it is salutary to consider the antics and quirks of the Intelligence services in two recent World Wars. If M.I.5 could employ Crowley and de Wohl, is there anything extraordinary about Walsingham and Burghley using the talents of Dee and Kelley? And if Ian Fleming, in his capacity of Assistant to the Director of Naval Intelligence, could think up anything as crazy as asking Crowley to interview Rudolf Hess, why should not Leicester ask Dee to get Laski to put questions to the angels? War calls for desperate measures and zany ideas; sometimes bizarre methods achieve surprising success.⁵

In the early part of the seventeenth century something of Dee's technique was being adopted by William Lilly, another astrologer who had studied Dee and paid tribute to the latter's ability as a secret agent. Lilly was consulted during the Civil Wars both by the Royalists and the Parliamentary Rebels as a caster of horoscopes for political purposes. He was one of the first astrologers to be called in by the military not only to forecast the likely

trends of campaigns, but to help in psychological warfare. General Fairfax called upon him to address his troops in prophetic terms intended to encourage their belief in his astrological talents: needless to say he forecast victory.

In 1647 Lilly published a work entitled the *Prophecies of Ambrose Merlin, with the Key to Unlock those abstruse Prophecies* and, as an addendum to the book, *Trithemius of the Government of the World by the presiding Angels*, a sure indication of Dee's influence on his studies. Lilly, in fact, made one curious reference to the "angelic conversations". "I have read over his book on *Conference with Spirits*," he wrote, "and thereby perceive many weaknesses in the manage of that way of Mosaical learning: but I conceive the reason why he had not more plain resolutions, and more to the purpose, was because Kelley was very vicious unto whom the angels were not obedient, or willingly did declare the questions propounded: *but I could give other reasons, but those are not for paper.*"⁶

Could the "other reasons" have been connected with espionage and cryptography and was Lilly reticent about this in case the English Secret Service might still have been employing similar methods? It seems not unlikely and it would certainly make sense that the manipulation of the seances for purposes of espionage would certainly interrupt Dee's philosophical approaches to his spiritual conversations. Robert Hooke, in his address to the Royal Society was equally reticent about this subject and rather pointedly declined to go into details about Dee's cryptographical system then, though later he prepared a secret paper on it.

Hooke, as has been noted earlier in the book, adopted and adapted a good deal of Dee's astrological hieroglyphics in his own writings and diaries, though sometimes he gave Dee's signs a meaning of his own. For example, Hooke recorded every orgasm he had with the sign of Pisces, a device which at some stage in the course of history has been adopted by some schoolgirls in noting their erotic dreams. However, in Hooke's case, the recording of orgasms was done purely for scientific and statistical interest: he had a passion for statistics and anything to do with numbers, which may account for his absorption in Dee's Enochian

system. Hooke also developed a game which he called "astrological chess that appeared to be derived in part at least from Enochian Chess. Very little indeed is known about this game. It is not certain whether Enochian Chess dates back merely to Dee's time, or much earlier. All that can be said is that it is based on the Enochian system and language and that it is almost completely unintelligible unless one has mastered the Enochian system. The game was also used for divination and for passing messages between the two players. The "Chess" pieces to be moved were decided by the throwing of a dice. It is a fascinating side-line of Dee's cabbalistic equipment, but the only reference to it other than by Robert Hooke is in Israel Regardie's *Golden Dawn*.⁷

Hooke was convinced that there were two methods of playing this game: first, for divination and scrying, sometimes in conjunction with the crystal; second, for passing messages without speaking. Hooke wrote in his paper on *An Ingenious Cryptographical System* that "Mr. John Marr, an excellent mathematician and geometrician and servant to King James and Charles the First, examined the precepts of the Enochian system and language as propounded and devised by John Dee and gave it as his opinion that while unquestionably this was primarily a magical system, used as such and should be interpreted as such, it also contained a most ingenious cipher or series of ciphers for conveying secret information. This system enabled a person to set out a secret message in what purported to be a confrontation between himself and spiritual creatures, or, when necessary, by the moving of objects resembling pieces of a game of chess so that each move gave an item of information. The system was further simplified in that the Enochian alphabet consisted of onlie twenty-one letters, a mightily useful economie to the cryptographer."⁸

Hooke, who seems to have done considerable detective work, analysed what, superficially at least, would seem to have been a perfect specimen of psychedelic visions recorded by Dee in June, 1583. This vision revealed a white castle with a breach in its walls, outside of which the female spirit Galvah lingered. Galvah

was transformed into a man, presented with a red and white staff, by means of which the "wicked queen", ruling in the castle, was compelled to submission. The "wicked queen" was then pardoned by the metamorphosed Galvah and married to the young prince whose rights she had usurped, but who was now released and they entered the castle together.

The interpretation which Hooke put upon this vision was that it was an Intelligence message intended to convey to Walsingham that Mary, Queen of Scots (the "wicked queen") had now rejected her plan for reconstructing the "Enterprise" against England and launching an invasion of Scotland and instead was planning to make friends with Elizabeth by associating herself with her son, James, who would guarantee her good conduct to England. Galvah, he claimed, was none other than Bess of Hardwick, the scheming Countess of Shrewsbury.

"I may seem to write incredibilia," stated Hooke, "but while this allegory in itself might seem obscure and so easily misinterpreted, the pentacle, if that be the exact word, which was provided as a cunning Key to this Mystery made all very simple and yet cleverlie concealed the fact that it was onlie cryptography."

Hooke explained that with each allegorical message was provided a Key containing the name or names of one or more of the Angels and that in these names lay the clue to the message. Thus in the narrative just mentioned the Key was:

S
Ab
Ath
I₈²¹

"From these *Filiae Filiarum Lucis*," wrote Hooke, "reading from the uppermost letter downwards until arriving at 'I' with the figures 21 over 8, which means 'EI,' is obtained the name SABATHIEL. This, when changed into its numerical components gives the numbers 3-30-6, which were the accepted ciphers used by Mr. Secretary Walsingham for depicting Mary, Queen of Scots, James, her son and the Countess of Shrewsbury."

This, admittedly, is purely Hooke's hypothesis, but it is one

which bears closer examination. Working backwards, it must be admitted that "30" was an accepted code number of James of Scotland, and that it was the habit of the Elizabethan statesmen to use numerical codes for leading figures. Randolph used such numerical ciphers for names in his letters to Walsingham and he employed "20" for Hunsdon and "3" for Mary, Queen of Scots. There is no proof that "6" was used for the Countess of Shrewsbury, but, as had been related in a previous chapter, there is a strong suspicion that the "Bess" in the strange equation in his manuscripts refers to the Countess of Shrewsbury. It is also historically perfectly feasible that Dee, with his knowledge of Bess of Hardwick, had even intercepted some of the correspondence passing from French sources via the Countess of Shrewsbury to Mary, Queen of Scots. It was between the end of 1552 and the first half of 1583 that this correspondence on the subject of such imbroglios was going on, with letters sometimes stuffed into high-heeled slippers and at other times hidden in the back of a looking-glass.

Sabathiel was one of the Angels and the name, being so closely related to mystical spiritualism, would not attract suspicion. The whole paraphernalia of the symbolic representation of the universe which Dee set out is full of combinations of words and figures which might well contain the keys to cryptographical writing and quite easily adapted to it without arousing suspicion. For example Dee wrote down the "seven names of God which not even the angels are able to pronounce" as follows:

S A A $\frac{21}{8}$ E M E
 B T Z K A S E 30
 H E I D E N E
 D E I M O L 30 A
 I 26 M E G C B E
 I L A O I $\frac{21}{8}$ V N
 I H R L A A L $\frac{21}{9}$

By reading these obliquely, according to the Enochian system, the names of the angels could be obtained. The system is still

extremely complicated, but the first set of clues provided from reading the above obliquely gives:

E
Me
Ese
Iana, etc., etc.

Similarly, still working obliquely and in another combination, one gets the *Filiae Filiarum Lucis* (which shows that Hooke had done a good deal of research) in this order:

S
Ab
Ath
Ized
Ekiei
Madimi, etc., etc.

The names of Dee's "Seven Great Angels" were: Sabathiel, Madimiel, Semiel, Nogahel, Corabiel, Lavanael and Zedekiel.

It was Hooke who revealed that Dee gave his secret signature as \overline{OO} explaining that what looked like a square root sign was really a gigantic seven, to give due prominence to what he regarded as a magical and holy number. For in Dee's system of the universe, as indeed in many cabbalistic systems, seven was the dominant number. There were the seven angels of the seven circles of heaven, and the names of the governors of the Aethyrs, or watch-towers all had seven letters—Occodon, Pascomb, Valgars, Doagnis, Pacasna, etc. In the complicated numerical and alphabetical tables there were seven squares by seven squares, all of which, including the Enochian alphabet and the diagrams of the names of the Aethyrs, their governors and the numbers of their servitors were duly tabulated in Dee's *Liber Scientiae; Auxilii et Victoriae Terrestris*.

Apart from using the "angelic conversations" for passing messages, the list of the thirty Aethyrs, their governors and servitors would provide a variety of codes for any would-be cryptographer. Each Aethyr consists of a three-letter name, viz. Lil, Arn, Zom,

Paz, Lit, etc. Each governor of the Aethyrs has servitors numbering four-figure totals.

Tabulated, the setting out of the Table of the Aethyrs reads:

	Name of Aethyr	Names of Governors	Numbers of Servitors	Totals
1	LIL	OCCODON PASCOMB VALGARS	7209 2360 5362	14931
2	ARN	DOAGNIS PACASNA DIALIVA	3636 2362 8962	15960
3	ZOM	SAMAPHA VIROOLI ANDISPI	4400 3660 9236	17296
4	PAZ	THOTANF AXZIARG POTHHIR	2360 3000 6300	11660
5	LIT	SAXTOMP NOCAMAL TIARPAX	8630 2306 5802	16736

... and so on down to the Thirtieth Aethyr, Tex.

Now the Enochian alphabet of twenty letters consists of A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, L, M, N, P, Q, R, S, T, U, X and Z. Also in each Aethyr the number of letters comprising the names of each governor totals twenty-one, in which the letter O recurs frequently, whereas there is no O in the Enochian alphabet. Another oddity is that whereas in some Aethyrs the totals of servitors tally with the numbers given in the third column, in others there are discrepancies. In the Aethyr LIT, for example, the servitors for the three governors total 16,738, whereas 16,736 is recorded in the totals column.

From any one of the Aethyr tables it is possible to develop both by letters and numbers, or a combination of both, a variety of cryptographical systems. This was Hooke's opinion and it is

one which has been confirmed by later cryptographical experts.

But to what extent were the "angelic conversations" manipulated for purposes of espionage? What is the meaning of Hooke's claim that the "angelic visions" were "faked by mechanical means"? It is extremely unlikely that Dee, ingenious inventor of mechanical toys of all kinds, could produce a "talking machine", though we do know that he specialised in the mechanical reproduction of bird's calls. Therefore it is feasible that he might have introduced something of this into seances when he wished to impress visitors, or to further espionage. What is more likely is that Dee sometimes practised the deception of kaleidoscopic pictures *inside* one of his crystals. He may well have introduced coloured sketches of angels or even of real people into a crystal and by means of mirrors have produced all kinds of strange effects. This is probably what Hooke meant.

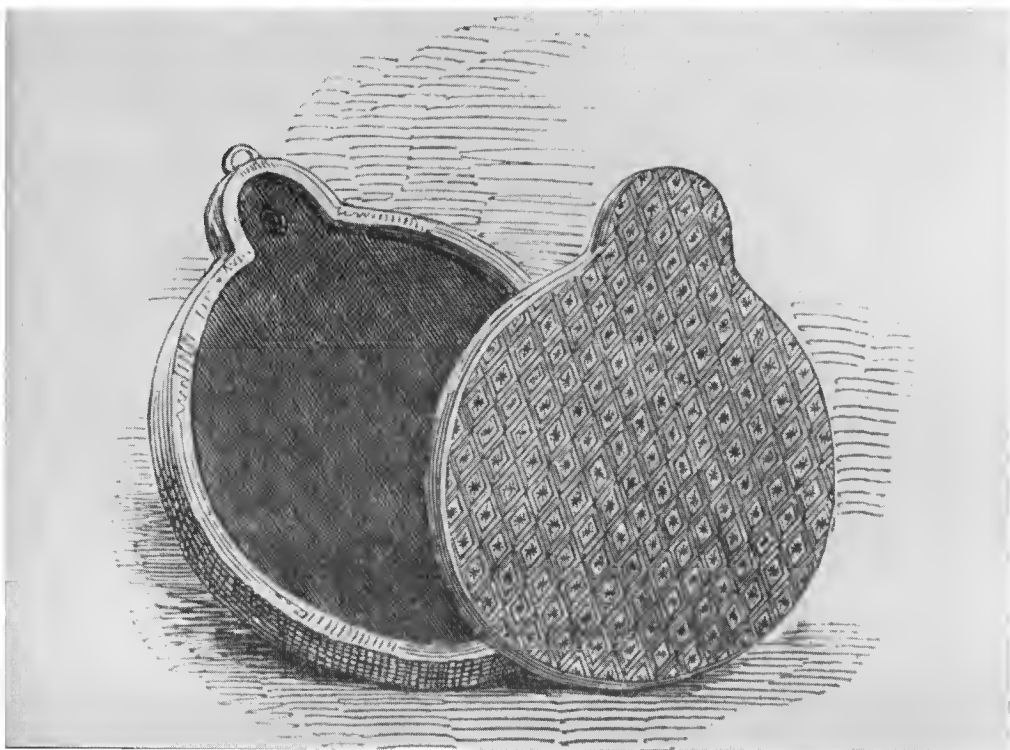
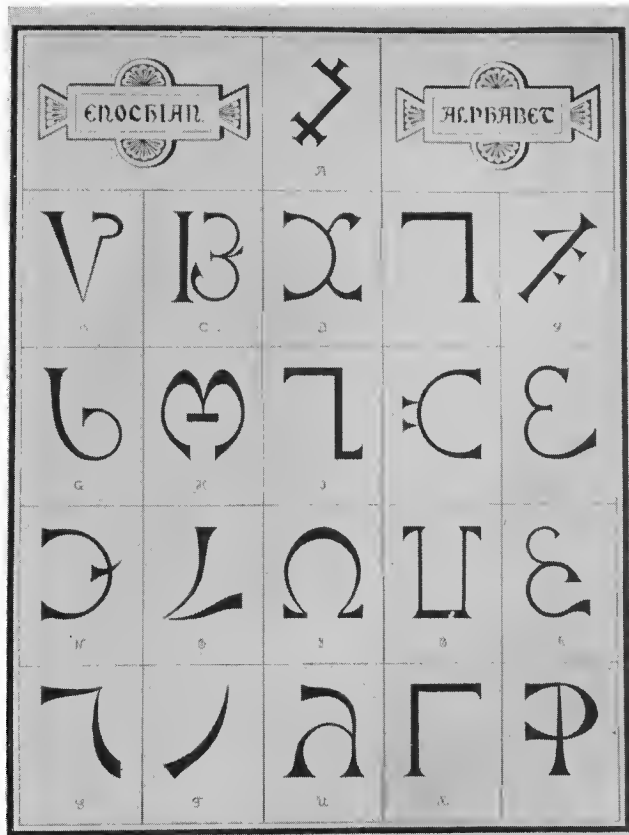
DEE AND THE SPANISH ARMADA

IT IS one of the axioms of espionage that, if you wish to spy on the activities of another state, you organise your secret service for this purpose not inside the country on which you are spying, but in that of a neighbouring state.

Dee was not so much an active operator as a collector of information and an assessor of it. In Central Europe he would be in an excellent position to receive information on Spain and the Netherlands, not to mention Russia. And in the years he spent in Poland and elsewhere England's espionage service was just beginning to reach its peak. The creation of such a service had been forced on Walsingham in the first place because of the increasing number of conspiracies inside England, threatening the Queen and her secrets. As these plots multiplied so Walsingham needed more agents, and as he unravelled each plot so he began to see that the trails as often as not led to the continent. Thus he had to employ agents at home to trap conspirators and unmask plots and build up abroad an Intelligence service which would enable him to combat them more effectively.

All this cost money and Walsingham had the greatest difficulty in persuading the Queen to give him financial aid for his Secret Service. The Queen trusted Walsingham, but often she did not share his views. As a result he had to use his own money to pay his agents on many occasions. Elizabeth was frankly sceptical about the chances of war with Spain. She had been warned so often by Leicester and Walsingham and nothing had happened that she began to doubt her own Intelligence reports.

The Enochian Alphabet;
below, Dee's principal
 Shew-stone, or crystal,
 now in the British Museum





The obsidian mirror, or
 "Black Stone", once owned
 by Dee

Horace Walpole, a later owner,
 nicknamed it "The Devil's
 Looking-Glass"; *below*, wax
 discs, engraved with figures
 and names, comprised part
 of the table which held the crystal
 used by Dee and Kelley in
 their scrying



It is not easy to trace the whole system of Walsingham's Secret Service abroad, partly because a good deal of it was conducted entirely by Walsingham himself and never committed to paper in official records. But it is fairly clear that the system never really got under way until 1587, perilously late in the day. By that time Walsingham had had sufficient reports to have grave suspicions that Spain was amassing a huge Armada of ships for an attack on England. On the strength of these he drew up, in the spring of 1587, his *Plot for Intelligence out of Spain*, which is still preserved in the State Paper Office. It is almost the sole documentary evidence of the organisation of his Secret Service.¹

This plan detailed the following:

1. The need to obtain some correspondence from the French Ambassador in Spain;
2. "To take order with some at Rouen to have frequent advertisements from such as arrive out of Spain at Nantes, Havre and Dieppe";
3. Sir Edward Stafford (English Ambassador in France) to obtain information from the Venetian Ambassador;
4. To set up an Intelligence post in Cracow for receiving reports on Spanish matters coming from the Vatican;
5. To nominate persons (French, Flemish or Italians) to travel along the Spanish coasts and report what preparations are being made at ports, furnishing them with letters of credit as a cover;
6. To obtain Intelligence from the Court of Spain and from Genoa;
7. To arrange Intelligence at Brussels, Leyden and in Denmark;
8. To employ Lord Dunsany (presumably as an agent).

This was a comprehensive and detailed plan. That it was possible to put it into operation was due to the fact that during this year Walsingham managed to obtain £3,300 from the Queen for strengthening his Intelligence service. It was a larger sum than he had ever had before, or that he obtained later. But even so, it was insufficient. His biographers all claim that he added large amounts from his private fortune.

Though Dee is not named as one of the chief agents in this plan there seems little doubt that he (and possibly Kelley, too) would be the man to set up an Intelligence post in Cracow. Dee

was here at this time and, despite the threats of the Papal Nuncio, he and Kelley managed to re-visit the city. It is more than likely that his chief informant on Spanish matters coming from the Vatican was Francesco Pucci, the double agent. One of the allegations made against Pucci by the Vatican authorities when finally they condemned him was that he had attempted to steal Papal correspondence with Philip of Spain some few years earlier.

Somehow Walsingham learned more exactly of the intentions of Philip of Spain by having intercepted a letter which Philip had written to the Pope. Dr. James Wellwood says that Walsingham sent orders to the continent for one of his spies in Rome to obtain a copy of this letter. The spy induced a gentleman of the Pope's bed-chamber to borrow the letter from the Pope's cabinet.²

Whether Dee and Pucci were involved in this episode is another matter, but Dee's reports on the Spanish Armada were undoubtedly of assistance to Walsingham. And, as has been clearly established, at least one of these reports emanated from an "angelic conversation", some few years before Walsingham had even started to set up his espionage system on the continent. Pucci was involved in the reputed burning of three copies of Dee's manuscripts in Prague in April, 1586. These included the *Book of Enoch*, *The Forty-Eight Keys of the Angels* and *Liber Scientiae Auxillii et Victoriae Terrestris*. Though copies of some of these manuscripts still exist (Kelley also had made a copy of *Enoch*), it is possible that some of the records of visions which in fact masked secret messages were destroyed for all time.

The story of Dee's warning that the Spaniards were planning to destroy the Forest of Dean by fire, already related in the first chapter, had its origin in Pucci and he was without doubt the source of much other valuable information, for he travelled widely and had close contacts in the Court of Navarre as well as at the Vatican. But it was Dee's powers of deduction, his keenly analytical mind and, above all, his wealth of knowledge about obscure customs in remote parts of England which enabled Pucci's report to be properly interpreted.

The "conversation" with Madimi which revealed this item of

Intelligence, brought back by Francis Garland to London was no doubt considered of such vital importance by Dee that he never committed it to his *Libri Mysteriorum*, or at least not in that exact form. Probably one of the reasons why he was so quick to evaluate the vague report which Pucci gave him was that for years he had deplored the destruction of English forests to keep the iron-works going. He had warned that de-forestation would be disastrous to England's maritime power. The threat of fire by foreign agents must have alarmed him considerably. Francis Garland preserved the record of the "conversation" in his life time and then passed it on to Dee's son, Arthur, who had it translated into Russian and presented to the Czar Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov whose personal physician he became. The version of the "conversation" given in chapter one is a translation from the Russian and, though every effort has been made to keep the translation approximating to Elizabethan English, it is nevertheless closer to the modern idiom.³

Curiously, there is extant another similar vision about a forest recorded by Dee on 27 March, 1585. This is entitled *Parabola de Nobis Duobus* and it is in the form of an allegory narrated by the angel Michael, another of Dee's favourites in the spirit world. It tells of a wood which grew up and the trees were young and how the "seas threw out the air that had subtilly stolen himself into them." There was one tree which was taller than the others and this "could not be moved" by the wind and this the forester noted and said to himself: "The force of this wind is great, but the tree that does not move is significant of some much deeper, hidden force."

Was this a hint of the concealed chimney, unshakeable by the wind, which the Spanish agents were reputed to have built?

Never in history did England owe so much to Intelligence, except perhaps in World War I, than in the years which immediately preceded the Armada. Here again was proof of the fact that a small power (and England was still then a relatively small power compared to the might of Spain and France) desperately needs an Intelligence service of the highest order if it is to survive the onslaughts of its enemies. Walsingham needed to play for

time and he did his utmost to delay Philip's naval preparations by having Spanish bills protested at Genoa. It is a tradition at Charterhouse School that Thomas Sutton, founder of the school, was largely responsible for having these Spanish bills of exchange protested. There is no positive proof of this story, but there is ample evidence of Walsingham's delaying tactics at Genoa.⁴

Walsingham's whole approach to espionage was remarkably like present day methods in many respects. He was a genius operating on a proverbial shoe-string, for, as Garrett Mattingly has written in his *Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, his Secret Service was dependent on "a few under-paid agents of varying ability... a system hardly larger or more efficient, except for the intelligence of its direction and the zeal of its volunteer aids, than that which every first-rate ambassador was expected to maintain for his own information, one which the governments of Florence or Venice would have smiled at as inadequate for the police of a single city."

Yet this "inadequate" force was in the span of a few years to save England and to shake the nation out of its prosperous sloth. It was Walsingham's cunning organisation, his skill in selecting his key figures and his indirect infiltration of the enemy by methods approved today which gave England the warning she needed. He concentrated his spies and network of agents not in Spain, but in Italy, France and those other European countries having close contacts with the Vatican, just as the Russians in World War II organised their spy network against Germany in Switzerland and that against U.S.A. in Canada. While he relied on a very few, highly intelligent, unmercenary and trustworthy English agents to collate and assess the information and had one humble clerk to sort and sift reports, he insisted that they should use mainly Italians, French, Germans and Flemings as their spies. Italy was an ideal recruiting ground for agents as Philip of Spain owed a considerable portion of his naval resources to his Neapolitan possession.

By the mid-summer of 1587 it was clear to Walsingham that the build-up of the Spanish Fleet was steadily increasing. He had a detailed report on the dispositions made by the Duke of

Santa Cruz and the stores being taken aboard the Spanish ships. In fact he had a complete and accurate dossier of the numbers of ships, their tonnage, numbers of troops, munitions, galley slaves and victuals. Spies had been maintained in the camp of the Prince of Parma and thus England learned of his plans to send a fleet of flat boats across the Channel when the Spanish Fleet had chased the enemy away.

Elizabeth's parsimony in finding funds for espionage may have been a trait inherited from her grandfather, but the truth was that as a monarch she possessed nothing like the revenues of her rivals. When she came to the throne, with the debts of Mary's reign confronting her, the Queen's total revenue from Crown lands, customs and other sources was little more than £200,000 a year. Out of this she had to maintain herself and her Court and practically the whole machinery of government. She could have resorted to taxation, but preferring to leave her people free and happy rather than to mulct them, she continued to regard taxation as an exceptional instrument of revenue-raising to be used sparingly. That she succeeded so well as she did with so little taxation was masterly national housekeeping. But it paid dividends with the people. Under Elizabeth they remained lightly taxed and those who made profits were to use them in the expansion of England's trade so that there developed a small kingdom of prosperity, where tolerance had succeeded persecution, where freedom was greater than in any continental country, in short a nation which was increasingly envied by every other country of the continent.

Dee warned that if news reached England that Philip of Spain was delaying his plans for invading England, this must not be taken as a sign of weakness. By now the "angelic conversations" had ceased, either for purely spiritual or scientific motives, or as a cover for espionage. Perhaps Dee guessed that his secret method of communication was suspected. At any rate there is no evidence that he used it again. But messengers from England appeared frequently during 1587 and by now he was begging Garland to report to Walsingham and Burghley that Philip was

merely postponing his plans to obtain more funds and to refit his ships, mounting "great castles on their fore-decks".

When the attempt at invasion came, he urged, "the state of the elements will be of the utmost importance in deciding the fate of the ships of Spayne."⁵

Dee was right. Shortly afterwards the Pope, who was perhaps keener even than Philip on the attack against England, and suspected the Spanish King of lack of decision, declared that on the day the first Spanish soldier set foot on English soil, he would give the King a million golden ducats.

But Walsingham still had to convince the Queen of the seriousness of the Spanish threat, and there is a certain amount of evidence that, like all great Intelligence chiefs, he sometimes invented threats where none existed, in order to justify his Secret Service's activities.

When Dee wrote home he often merely hinted at items of information, intending the recipients of his letters to read between the lines, as for example in one letter in September, 1587, to Walsingham in which he referred to the Polish King's election, saying "the mysteries whereof, by the time this bearer reaches England, will be known to you." Money seems to have been more plentiful at this time, for he engaged one John Basset to teach his children Latin, "...and I do give him seven ducats by the quarter and the term to begyne this day, and so I gave him presently seven ducketts of Hungary in gold before my wife. God spede his work."

Alchemical experiments were continuing and at this stage he was still helping Kelley. Apparently he had made progress on his own account, for, on 28 September, he recorded that "I delivered to Mr. Edward Kelley (earnestly requiring it as his part) the half of all animall which was made. It is to weigh 20 ozs.; he wayed it himself in my chamber. He brought his weights purposely for it. My Lord had spoken to me before some, but Mr. Kelley had not spoken."

Here Dee was again being cautious about what he set down in his diary and the word "animall" is undoubtedly a code-word for manufactured gold.

About this time he noted further disagreements and rows with Kelley, making frequent references to Kelley's "violent rages". In November Francis Garland was calling on Dee in Trebona, bringing with him a letter from Dyer. Edmond Hilton was another bearer of messages from England and so, too, was Lawrence Overton, a merchant whom Jane Dee had nursed when he became ill in their house. Exactly what caused this flurry and bustle between England and Trebona cannot be ascertained, but it is certain that more than one of these messengers advised Dee to come home and there must have been one similar request from the Queen herself, for more than a year later Dee wrote to Elizabeth apologising for not obeying an earlier summons to return in the autumn of 1587.

Kelley was now very much more independent of Dee. He employed a man named John Carpio to build furnaces for his alchemical experiments and he was joined by his brother, Thomas. He had also begun to build up his own library, as is evident by this note of Dee's on 12 December, 1587: "...Mr. Ed. Keley his lamp overthrow, the spirit of wyne being long spent to [o] nere and the glass being not stayed with buks about it, as it was wont to be; and the same glas so flitting on one side, the spirit was spilled out, and burnt all that was on the table where it stood, lynnenn and written bokes—as the Bok of Zacharias with the Alkanor that I translated out of French for some by spirituall could not [?]; Rowlaschy his Third boke of Waters Philosophicall; the Boke called *Angellicum Opus*, all in pictures of the work from the beginning to the end; the copy of the man of Budwise Conclusions for the Transmutations of Metalls and 40 leaves in 40, entitled *Extractiones Dunstani*, which he himself extracted and noted out of [Saint] Dunstan's his boke and the very boke of Dunstan was cast on the bed hard by the table."

The "very boke of Dunstan" was almost certainly a copy of the manuscripts which Kelley had claimed to have found at Glastonbury, for this seems to have been his principal guide to alchemical research. St. Dunstan (924–88) was born near Glastonbury of which he was appointed Abbot by King Edmund

and his monastery became famous as a seat of learning. He later became Archbishop of Canterbury. This must have been the work dealing with the Philosopher's Stone.

Despite the incessant arguments between Dee and Kelley there was always, on Dee's part at least, an attempt to seek reconciliation. Quite early in 1588 Dee demonstrated his skill as an amateur doctor by giving assistance to Thomas Kelley's wife, Lydia, when she was "miscarried of two twin boys: she was merry and well till the night before: I helped her to finde the deade birthe within one howre after I had caused her to have myrh given unto her in wyne warmed, the quarter of an ounce; better after she was discharged of a secondyne, and at all ones. The woman was sufficiently strong after."

Lilly told an interesting story about how Kelley made progress in his alchemical work. This was related to him by a merchant who had lived in Trebona at the time Dee and Kelley were there. One day an old friar came to Dee's lodgings. Dee peeped down the stairs and told Kelley to say he was not at home. The friar then said he would call again. True to his word, he repeated the visit a few days later and again Dee declined to see him. Probably he suspected the friar was a spy.

"At which," wrote Lilly, "the friar was very angry. 'Tell thy master I came to speak with him and to do him good, because he is a great scholar and famous... I came to instruct him... in some other more profound things. Do thou, Kelley come along with me, I will make thee more famous than thy master, Dee.'

"Kelley was very apprehensive of what the friar delivered and thereupon suddenly retired from Dee and wholly applied unto the friar, and of him either had the Elixir ready made, or the perfect method of its preparation and making. The poor friar lived a very short time after; whether he died a natural death or was otherwise poisoned or made away by Kelley, the merchant who related this did not certainly know."⁶

There is no confirmation of this story, but about this time Kelley established himself in apartments of his own in the Rosenberg palace. Yet while he wanted to keep to himself his alchemical secrets and to hide from Dee whatever successes he achieved, he

was still anxious to seek Dee's assistance on occasions. He sent Dee one message, telling him that, "You study too much. It is late in the day to go to Cromlaw, as you intended; he wishes you to come to pass the tyme with him at play."

Meanwhile the two-faced Kelley was undermining Dee's influence with Rosenberg, hinting that his former master wasted his time in unprofitable intellectual researches, and he took advantage of intercepting messages from Dyer to beg the latter to press for his recognition at the English Court on the grounds of his alchemical achievements and the manufacture of gold. For suddenly the demand for gold became important in London as England prepared to face the Armada and the news that the Spanish Plate Fleet had returned from the West Indies with a cargo of sixteen million ducats in gold accentuated this demand. Kelley no doubt thought to manufacture gold to meet these requirements: it was a mad dream, but in times of crisis even sober statesmen might wish to listen to extravagant propositions which they would reject out of hand in days of peace.

Even in February, on the eve of their final break, Kelley was still requesting Dee's aid. On 8 February Dee noted that "Mr. E. K. sent for me to his laboratory over the gate to see how he distilled sericon, according as in tyme past and of late he hard of me out of Ripley [Ripley]."

Then on 16 February Kelley rode away from his apartments, taking most of his assistants with him. Though a desultory correspondence was carried on for some years, Dee never saw his scryer again.

* * *

All this time Jane Dee had borne the domestic trials and upheavals caused by Kelley with a patience and forgiveness that made her a Griselda among wives. Perhaps she did not possess Griselda's meekness, for she was always ready to speak her mind and was quick to take offence. But she had the virtues which fitted her admirably for her strange, philosophically-minded husband who was so much older than herself. Though easily angered by what she considered base treatment, she was above

all a peace-maker and her treatment of Kelley's poor wife was beyond reproach.

On 28 February Theodore Dee was born and this event brought husband and wife closer together than ever before. Cynics might point to the fact that this child was conceived during the cross-matching experiment, bearing in mind that this agreement was signed and sealed on 3 May, 1587. But the diary commentaries suggest such mutual and blissful delight in the birth of this child that one must assume Dee was the father. In any event the experiment had failed to work before the end of the previous May, and the Dees continued to produce more children in the years ahead.

"Payneful Jane" was one of Dee's endearing epithets for his wife. Whether this referred to physical aches and pains, or to the pain she must have suffered through Kelley's scheming is not clear. But the devotion of this pair shines through the few letters which exist of their correspondence. "Swethart," wrote Dee on one occasion, "I commend me unto you, hoping in God you ar in good health as I, and my children, with all my household am here, I prayse God for it."

In April Dee was still appealing for goodwill from Kelley: "I writ to Mr. Edward Kelley and Mistress Kelley ij. charitable letters, requiring at theyr hands mutual charity."

Walsingham was still lamenting the fact that his Queen would not spend more money on his Intelligence service. "I would she did build and depend upon God," he said, but in reality he meant that he wished she would pour funds into his coffers, provide pensions for those of the Scottish nobility who might support her and give James of Scotland the money he sought. Walsingham's intentions were unquestionably good and sound; the methods he proposed were far too costly. Wisely, Elizabeth husbanded her resources, kept a tight hold of the purse strings and decided to keep James waiting and guessing. While seeming to delay any action against Spain and still to be seeking an arrangement with Philip, she decided to let the cause of England be espoused by her merchant adventurers. They, she decided, were the best advertisement of English power, so she was secretly

delighted when Drake sailed to Cadiz, entered the harbour and destroyed thousands of tons of shipping. For Drake had proved that English long-range guns were the answer to the might of Spain's much vaunted fleet.

And so it proved. The Pope had to admit that "we have a poor opinion of this Spanish Armada and fear some disaster." The action at Cadiz forced Philip to make up his mind: the Armada must sail against England. But Drake's action had in effect forced him to delay an invasion.

Drake had another invaluable asset which Elizabeth regarded as of the utmost importance. He was a buccaneer and able therefore to take personal responsibility for his actions and, as long as he achieved results and knew that his Queen was in her heart secretly supporting him, he was completely unconcerned if, for diplomatic reasons, some of his activities had to be officially disavowed. And as a further mark of her esteem for her merchant-adventurers and patriotic pirates the Queen nominated Hawkins as Treasurer of the Navy.

Some of Dee's defence plans, developed years before in his treatise on the Navy, were put into action. He had always insisted on the importance of setting up victualling ports for the Fleet; this was now partially carried out. Dee had consistently warned that great storms and abnormal gales were to be expected during 1588 and that these should be taken into account when preparing for the invasion. More than a year before one of his angelic narratives had spoken of a vision of castles rising out of the waves, with their raised draw-bridges pointed in one direction, but with "the inhabitants therein intent upon proceeding elsewhere and presenting a threat thereto. Theyr navigation shud be disregarded for they shall go not whence they seem and they will not be diverted from their real purpose until the angels from the watch-tower [here the writing is unintelligible] mak the sign Ohooohaatan."⁷

"Ohooohaatan" was the Enochian name for one of the four great Elemental Kings. Significantly, this was the King of Fire. As the Duke of Parma later tried to mislead the English by putting out reports that the Armada would not be heading for

England, but preparing for an attack on Walcheren, Dee was probably warning Walsingham to beware of a trap.

Dee's warnings of severe storms in 1588 were to some extent borne out by other astrologers and weather prophets. Throughout Europe there were warnings of impending disasters linked with abnormal weather. The year 1588 was to be a year of doom. But while Dee sought for scientific explanations for his own forebodings and attempted to give accurate weather forecasts, other astrologers based their prophecies of disaster on the numerology of the Revelation of St. John, claiming that all history since the birth of Christ was divided into a series of cycles, each cycle being terminated by some tremendous event. A century before Johan Muller of Konigsberg, a noted mathematician of his day and one who had assisted Columbus with astronomical tables, had declared that an eclipse of the sun in February, 1588, would be marked by two total eclipses of the moon, one in March and one in August, setting this down in Latin verse, which, translated, reads:

"A thousand years after the birth of the Virgin and five hundred and eighty-eight after that brings the direct disaster. Total catastrophe may not occur, but the storms will cause havoc by land and sea and the whole world will suffer astonishing upheavals, followed by widespread sorrow."

Naturally each nation interpreted these prophecies, publicised by a large number of almanacks which attracted great attention, according to its own policies and prejudices. In Spain this tale of woe caused desertions from the Fleet and an astrologer in Lisbon was arrested for "making false and discouraging predictions." Recruiting slackened off because of the forecasts of disaster which appeared in pamphlets and almanacks. An anonymous correspondent sent a disturbing communication to William Allen, Cardinal and leader of the Douai Seminary, including with it a copy which was to be passed on to the Pope. This referred to a marble slab which had recently been found in the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, on which were said to be carved prophetic verses of disaster and "the fall of a mighty empire" beginning with the words "Post mille exactos a partu virginis annos..."

These, claimed the correspondent, were the words of Merlin, King Arthur's magician warning of the destruction of Uther Pendragon's empire, and the mysterious trembling of the earth which had revealed this marble was an act of God intended to impress on those who saw it the doom which was in store for another mighty empire in 1588.⁸

Was Dee indulging in psychological warfare as tactics of counter-espionage? In his "angelic conversations" he had recorded to the Emperor Rudolph and King Stephen of the terrible disasters which lay ahead. Undoubtedly Rudolph, who believed firmly in astrology, had passed on these warnings to the Spanish Ambassador and to the Papal Nuncio, who in turn had relayed them to the Vatican. Often in the winter of 1587, Rudolph, despite his show of scepticism to Dee, had looked out from his tower in the Hradschin and watched the three planets approaching their conjunction. Dee had good reason to make use of Rudolph for spreading news of disaster, for the Emperor communicated with a wide range of astrologers as far away as Sicily, Denmark and Spain, often using a special courier to carry his observations and intelligence on such matters.

Those experts who read the weather according to the stars would have been certain to uphold the forecast of exceptionally bad weather in 1588 and this would give credence to the other and unconfirmable reports of the destruction of a mighty empire. Rudolph was jealous of Spanish triumphs and probably preferred to think that disaster would hit Spain most severely. As to the Glastonbury story this almost certainly emanated from Dee and again the finding of the marble stone containing the "dire warning of peril and destruction of the mightie, lit up by flames" was revealed by Madimi in at least one of the seances which King Stephen attended.

In Amsterdam and in Paris prophetic almanacks poured off the printers' presses, promising that there would be violent tempests, terrible floods, hail and snow in midsummer, darkness at midday and strange convulsions of earth and ocean. But, significantly, this vogue for printing warnings of disaster did not occur in England. In what prophetic almanacks did appear any

suggestion of catastrophe was muted and played down. For example one such almanack merely noted that "many strange events to happen which purposely are omitted in good consideration. God Almighty who only knoweth what shall come to pass, turn all evils away from us. Amen!"

No doubt the English authorities intervened with the printers to prevent the publication of prophecies which would spread woe and despondency. Walsingham would certainly not wish for Dee's psychological warfare to boomerang against the English people and so destroy his true purpose. For the agents who spread these reports were clever enough not to name Spain, or any other empire, as the one likely to suffer. A certain vagueness was much more effective. On the other hand the Privy Council permitted the publication of a pamphlet by Thomas Tymme arguing against the prophecies, entitled *A Preparation against the prognosticated dangers of 1588*.

Thus the stage was set for the year which was to mark the end of Spanish dominance and the beginning of England's omnipotence on the seas.

RETURN TO ENGLAND

DEE HAD always taken the view that, if properly handled, the smaller, but much more manoeuvrable English Fleet would be more than a match for the top-heavy, clumsy Spanish galleons. He had urged that the gun-power of the English would be a decisive factor, but even more that the weather could decide the issue. "Not manie of the Spanyish King's shippes will survive a storme of any great size," he had told Dyer.

His thesis had always been, and he had sent repeated warnings to the Court on this, that the English should not be tempted to risk disaster from storms by going out to meet the Spaniards, but that they should lie in wait and let the weather become their ally against the Spanish Fleet.

The year 1588 proved, as the prophets had said, to be excessively stormy and the English ships were lying wind-bound in harbour when news came that the Armada had arrived off the coast of Cornwall on 19 July. By superb seamanship the English ships managed to put to sea in time.

The Spanish plan seemed to be to progress up the English Channel and by doing so to terrify the population and then to link up with transport ships of Parma from the Low Countries. Possibly, or so it seemed, another Spanish aim was to set up a base in the Isle of Wight.

But from the time the English Fleet made contact with the Armada on 21 July the Spanish aim was thwarted. There was a running battle all the way along the Channel, forcing the Spaniards past the Isle of Wight and then dislodging them from

their anchorage off Calais, where they paused to recoup from their losses. The Armada was more or less intact, but quickly forced to put to sea again by the English fireships. Two catastrophes overcame the Spaniards. First, the English manoeuvred them away from any chance of linking up with Parma's forces; second, a change of wind caused the Armada to sail north before the wind.

From then on the Spaniards were doomed and, as Dee had prophesied, the weather became England's ally. There was no need to lose ships in such a gale pursuing the harassed Spaniards. The ships of the Armada were scattered and demoralised. They tried to sail round the north coast of Scotland and to the west of Ireland to return to Spain, but more than half of them were wrecked. It was a bedraggled, impotent rabble of ships which limped sadly back to Spain.

Yet in England it was hard for Elizabeth or any of her statesmen to realise what a triumph had come their way. The main concern was at the drain on the nation's slender financial resources, knowing that if by any chance the Spaniards recovered, England faced not merely a new war, but national bankruptcy. The Court still thought that Parma would attempt a counter-attack, possibly even invasion, which was why an army was formed at Tilbury. Even Drake did not realise that Parma could do little.

England was fully awake now to the dangers which had beset her for so many years: for that reason she could not realise that in her darkest hour victory had been miraculously granted her. That realisation was not to come for many months. Thus, in a noble speech at Tilbury, Elizabeth, addressing her troops, expressed the mood of her people:

"I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England, too, and I think foul scorn that Parma of Spain, or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm; to which, rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field."

During that fateful July Dee was still receiving visitors from England. On 7 July he recorded that Thomas Southwell came to Trebona to visit him and again on the twentieth of the month that Dyer had arrived. But these visits seem to have been concerned with alchemy and not Intelligence. In August Southwell rode to Prague, having spoken of a philosopher named Swift, who had given him a "lump of the Philosopher's Stone so big as a fist". And Dyer, who had been so close a friend of Dee, was now turning his attention to Kelley about whose alchemical experiments he showed enthusiasm.

Kelley had long since told Dee that in his view spiritual conversations were valueless because "no money can be expected to be received from Good Angels", affirming that wealth "appertaineth to the wicked ones, seeing they were the Lords of this world", thus in a single sentence destroying all Dee's belief in his previously professed religious outlook. Two factors had kept these two men together in the past: Kelley's abilities as a scryer and their link with the Secret Service. Undoubtedly with Dee both factors weighed equally. For Kelley greed and superstition, especially once he was away from Dee, caused him to turn to the evil spirits for inspiration and it seems probable that about this time he turned to scrying again on his own account. Possibly he asked Dee to give him one of his crystals, for on 4 December Dee had noted in his diary that "I gave to Mr. Edward Kelley my glass, so highly and long esteemed of our Queene and the Emperor [Rudolph]."

Poor Dee, despite all his experience of Kelley's false promises, his deceits and trickery, he always found it hard to refuse Kelley a favour. On the other hand there is some reason for believing that in this instance his hand was forced and that emissaries from London, possibly Dyer, had insisted the crystal be handed over.

The previous month Dee had written a short letter to the Queen, congratulating her on the defeat of the Armada and thanking her for "calling me, Mr. Kelley and our families home."¹ So possibly at this stage, even though the final break between them had occurred, Walsingham or somebody was still trying to

keep them together. Yet on 18 December there was further evidence of Kelley's deceit, for Dee sorrowfully recorded that the crystal he had given Kelley "he had given to my Lord Rosenberg and Rosenberg had given it to the Emperor."²

Though he had been invited to return to England by the Queen, Dee seems to have been in no hurry to do so. Intelligence work may have detained him for in August, 1589, he mentioned that Edmund Hilton went "towards Stade to go to England with letters to disclose the treason of Perkins."

Strype quoted from "a secret letter from Walsingham from Dee in the Low Countries", stating that he had given the Secretary "Intelligence of affairs". There was no reference as to what these affairs were, but in another letter of Dee's, dated 22 August, in an unsigned and disguised hand, addressed to a "Sir Albert", there was a warning about "a Jesuit named Perkins." This man, opined Dee, was "sent and came from Rome fraught with diverse subtle devilries of most damnable treason against the life of her sacred Majestie Royall. He was a little before Whitsuntide last at Prague, intending to go by Dansk (apparayled as a merchant) into England to execute his most hellish purpose. He is known to be an Archetraytor who hath given a counsaile to the Romish Bishop of the Spanish King in all their great attempts against Her Majestie."³

Niceron in his *Memoires* mentioned that it was widely believed on the continent that Dee acted as an official spy for Elizabeth during this period. If this was so, it was not surprising that the Queen wished him to come home, for no doubt by this time he was suspected by many. But perhaps the spectacular successes of England against Spain made other nations wary of denouncing him. At least in the Low Countries he was able to enjoy greater security than he had in either Poland or Bohemia. He much lamented Elizabeth's refusal of the crown of the Netherlands and feared that disastrous results would accrue from her declining it.

As he waited at Bremen Dee still expected that Kelley would join him so that they could return home together. Mrs. Kelley had already left for England. Dee, who knew that financial prob-

lems must loom large again when he returned home, must by this time have been desperately hoping that Kelley might, as he had promised, share with him the secret of his progress with the transmutation of metals into gold. Sheer necessity had forced Dee at last to take more than a passing interest in this project. Despite their disagreements Dee had some slender basis for optimism, for Kelley had already told him half the secret of his success: the year before Dee had written in his diary with great satisfaction, "E.K. did open a great secret to me. God be thanked."

But Kelley no longer had any thoughts about his old master. He was basking in the warmth of Rosenberg's regard for him, excited by the accord the Count had given him and had no intention whatsoever of returning to England. True, he had only succeeded in producing small quantities of an *ersatz* gold and rings of gold wire, which could be twisted round the finger. But Kelley was a clever salesman and he had certainly sold himself to the gullible Rosenberg. On the basis of his confident promises to make gold in even larger quantities he was given a knighthood by the Emperor Rudolph, who had now fully accepted him on Rosenberg's recommendations. Though he was addressed by Englishmen as "Sir Edward Kelley", his title was something akin to a combination of a French Chevalier and a baron. Dee wrote to Walsingham saying that Kelley was now "in most favourable manner created a Baron of the Kingdom of Boemia."

Dee and Kelley kept in touch by letter, the messengers being either Thomas Kelley, or Francis Garland. But Kelley was always evasive about his activities and his plans until in the autumn of 1589 it became clear that he would not join Dee. So on 3 November Dee noted in his diary that he had "resolved to go to England; I suspected uppon Mr. Secretary Walsingham, his letters."

From subsequent comments of Dee about the knavery and malicious reports being made about him to London, it seems clear that Kelley had in some way sought to discredit Dee with the authorities in England and to press for recognition of his

own achievements. Dyer now openly sided with Kelley against Dee and his influence in London was considerable.

Extravagance was, however, still one of the main causes of Dee's financial stresses and strains. His journey home from Bohemia cost him nearly £800, an excessive sum by Elizabethan standards, and this suggests that he must have had adequate funds from somewhere before he left the continent. He returned with his family and some servants in three coaches and with three wagons for his luggage. Each coach had four horses and the party was protected by a guard of twenty-four soldiers. This presents a very different picture of his return from that presented by many writers of a man broken in spirit and more or less bankrupt. As to the authenticity of this statement, it was made on oath by Dee himself before the Commissioners appointed by Queen Elizabeth at a later date to inquire into his circumstances.

It was a proud, if not a triumphant entry to England when on 2 December, 1589, the Dee family landed at Gravesend. Almost immediately he had audience of the Queen at Richmond and, whatever misgivings he may have had about Walsingham, Lilly recorded that "he was very favourably received by Her Majesty." His chagrin at the ruin of his library and laboratories and the trickery of Kelley was more than mollified by the Queen's kindness and the generosity of his old friend, Adrian Gilbert. The latter, who was his first visitor at Mortlake, offered Dee "as much as I could require at his hands, both for my goods carried away and for the mynes." This obviously referred to the royalties on mines in Devonshire which had previously been granted him.

Yet despite all this help, despite the fact that during the first three years after his arrival back in England he received £500 in cash as well as gifts of wine, whole sheep, pigs, wheat, sugar and books, he still remained in debt. He demanded the best for his growing family and who, in the circumstances, could blame him. He had served his country and his Queen patriotically and well for many years and been one of the leaders of the new learning. Much of his financial trouble was undoubtedly his own fault, even if payments for his services were sometimes meagre. Through his own carelessness in not arranging for their payment

to him while he was overseas, he had lost the small revenues from his lay rectorships. Kelley had given him vague verbal promises of an annual income from the proceeds of the manufacture of gold. Needless to say he received nothing from that quarter, though Thomas Kelley came to see him in January, 1590, and, according to Dee, "offered me the loan of ten pounds in gold." He sent him this sum "that same evening in Hungary new duckettes, by John Croker."

Thomas Kelley had hinted at his brother's imminent return to England and had come to London to lead his cause at Court. Edward Kelley had professed to have produced nearly an ounce of gold from about an ounce and a quarter of mercury. Burghley, upon hearing this and having a further report from Dyer, immediately became interested, for England's financial resources had been severely strained by the cost of repulsing the Spanish invasion attempt. The Lord Treasurer sent a message to Dyer, at that time the Queen's Agent in Prague, urging him to ask "Sir Edward Kelley to come over to his native cuntrye and honour Her Majestie with the fruites of such knowledge as God has given him."⁴

Whatever his traumatic experiences with Kelley, his nightmare memories of the cross-matching proposals and Kelley's propensity for conjuring up evil spirits and the dangerous life he had led abroad, Dee settled down without much difficulty to a tranquil domestic life of rectitude and orthodoxy. He certainly seemed anxious to silence his critics by this method. Perhaps it was for this reason that he had a gallery built in Mortlake Church and renewed his acquaintanceship with a number of the clergy. He also had long conversations with Camden and sent his son Arthur to school at Westminster, where Camden was a master.

On 5 March, 1590, a daughter was born to the Dees, and in choosing her name Dee supplied a touch of unorthodoxy which was untypical for him at that time. He named her Madimi after his guardian angel of the spiritual exercises. Or was this a sly reminder to Walsingham of the role played by Madimi in espionage? Walsingham was at the christening in Mortlake Church and Lady Walsingham was Madimi's godmother. So it would seem

that Dee's fears about Walsingham having been set against him were unfounded. Within a month of this ceremony Dee was noting in his diary on 16 April that "God Sir Francys Walsingham died at night *hora undecima*."

Dee's younger children were sent to school at Mortlake, being taught by a Mr. Lee, to whom Dee paid "howse rent and 40 shillings yerely for my three sons and my daughter." His diary in this period was almost solely taken up with domestic matters, but there are far more references in it to his wife than had been the practice in earlier years. Most of these references are expressed in astrological symbols, difficult to decipher or capable of a variety of interpretations. It would certainly seem that Jane was very much in his thoughts. The signs of Venus and Pisces suggest amorous associations. Dee was now sixty-three years old, but he was undoubtedly sexually active and the sign of Pisces may, as in the case of Robert Hooke, have denoted the joys of an Indian summer honeymoon. Most puzzling is the frequent entry in the diaries of the phrase, always written in Greek, "Jane had them." What "them" referred to is a mystery. It could have been dreams or visions.

Visitors to the Dee home were still numerous. Richard Candish and his famous nephew, Thomas, who had sailed round the world, came to discuss navigational problems with Dee. Lady Cobham sent Jane a present of sugar and pepper. But the now ageing scholar was not satisfied altogether with a domestic life which appeared to be entirely blissful. He hankered after other appointments and at the same time toyed with the idea of rebuilding his laboratories and perhaps indulging in some new experiments. He asked for the mastership of the Hospital of Saint Cross at Winchester, but nothing came of this. The Queen seemed to prefer that he continued his experiments in the hope that he would "continue to benefit the realme". She gave him her official permission to conduct whatever alchemical experiments he saw fit, without hindrance from any subject or any of the laws against magic. He earned a little money by drawing some horoscopes and other astrological work.

At the same time he continued his correspondence with Kelley

and without doubt wistfully hoped that his scryer might return. Letters came from Kelley via Garland in March and replies were sent by hand of Thomas Kelley in April, Dee carefully addressing his former servant as "Sir Edward Kelley, Knight, at the Emperor's Court at Prague."

But in June Dee must have been pessimistic again about the chances of a reunion with Kelley for he noted in his diary on the fifth "terrible news of Edward Kelley against me." The following month he saw the Archbishop of Canterbury and "talked with him frankly of my right to parsonages and to the treatise of Sir Edward Kelley, his Alchimy." There followed a good deal of correspondence with the Lord Treasurer and the Lord Chancellor on the same subject.

That Dee was still devoting some of his days to study of the occult would seem to be borne out by an entry for 31 July: "I gave to Mr. Richard Candish the copy of Paracelsus Twelve Lettres written in French with my own hand: and he promised me, before my wife, never to disclose to any that he hath it and that yf he die before me, he will restore it agayn to me, but if I dy befor him he shall deliver it to one of my sonnes, most fit among them to have it."

So Jane was a witness to some discussion on Renaissance magic. Could it be that the frequent references to Jane in his diary at this time can be interpreted that he was trying to use her as a medium? Was Jane seeing visions? Was he seeking to attain some mystical state through the rituals of connubial bliss to counteract the horrors of the cross-matching experiment? The astrological sign language which he employed was a strange mixture of the erotic and the cabbalistic. One likes to picture this ageing man and his young wife reliving their honeymoon by invoking Venus in that Latin tract which Dee had himself so beautifully written and embellished with scrolls and drawings.

But in August of that year Dee was troubled by another kind of spirit. Ann Frank, his nurse, he wrote, had been "long tempted by a wycked spirit. But this day it was evident how she was possessed of him. God is, hath byn and shall be her protector and deliverer! Amen."

Three days later he noted that Ann Frank was "sorrowful, well comforted and stayed in God's mercy acknowledging." The following day he annointed her in holy oil on her breast for the expulsion of the wicked one. "Then twyse annointed, the wycked one did reseat a while." But poor Ann could not easily escape from whatever it was that tormented her mind. On 8 September Dee rescued her from drowning herself in the well, but finally on 29 September he had to record with a sad heart that she "most miserably did cut her owne throte."

For the remainder of the year Dee seems to have been fobbed off with promises and presents, but there was very little prospect of an important appointment. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave him five pounds in "ryalls and angells" and on 20 November the Queen sent for him and said she would send him "something to kepe Christmas with." Candish gave his wife forty shillings and sent Dee ten pounds in "ryalls and angells"—not the first gift, for Dee acknowledged that "before he sent me £20, making £32 in all."

He must have made appeals to the Queen for assistance in recovering damages for his looted library and laboratories, for at the beginning of December the Queen commanded Mr. John Herbert, Master of Requests, to write to the Commissioners on his behalf. True to her word, the Queen sent him one hundred angells as a Christmas present and on 4 December she called at his door, where "she gratusly putting down her mask did say with mery chere, 'I thank thee, Dee; there was never promisse made, but it was broken or kept.'"

A cryptic remark, this—part generous gesture, but possibly a mild rebuke. Had the Queen hoped that Dee would provide her with the boon of manufactured gold, or had he hinted that it might be in his power to do so and failed her? A clue to this speculation might be found in an entry in the diary for 16 December that Candish had "received word from the Queen that Dee could do "as he would in philosophie and alchery and none shold controll or molest him."

Maybe the Queen was anxious to keep him on his mettle and determined not to let him browse unproductively in lay rector-

ships. For early in 1591, it was made clear to him that he had no hope of recovering his parsonages. So Dee turned again to his writings and produced *A Triple Almanack for the yeare of oure Lorde God, 1591*, a major work in which he included three calendars, the Common Calendar, the Gregorian and his own, as well as a series of prophecies and astrological forecasts on the weather.

At this time he was visited by some of his Welsh relatives and friends. There was a Thomas Griffiths, "my cosen from Llanbedr", who came to see him, also Sir Thomas Jones, who offered Dee his castle of Emlyn in Wales, but this offer was not taken up.⁵

Meanwhile Kelley was being put to the test. His alchemical experiments were not producing gold in the quantities he had promised and both Rosenberg and the Emperor Rudolph were getting restive. Even the Lord Treasurer began to have his doubts for he suggested to Kelley that he should "send Her Majestie as a token a good round sum of money, say enough to defray the expenses of the Navy for the summer." Nor was that his only attempt to call Kelley's bluff. On 18 February, 1591, he asked him for "a prescription for the Elixir of Life."

"Many say," went on the Lord Treasurer, "that if you come not, it is because you cannot perform what has been reported of you. . . . I am expressly commanded by Her Majestie to require you to have regard to her honour . . . be assured of worldly reward, you can make your Queen so happie . . . surely as no subject she hath can do the like. Good Knight, let me end my letter, conjuring you in God's holy name not to keep God's gift from your natural cuntry, but rather helpe make Her Majestie a glorious and victorious power againste the mallyce of hers and God's enemies."¹⁶

By this time Elizabeth had received the piece of "gold" made from the warming-pan. No doubt she was duly impressed and, with her Tudor fondness for money, yearned for further evidence of Kelley's powers. As for the Lord Treasurer, he needed funds desperately, even though taxes had been imposed to deal with the financial situation caused through the Armada. But Kelley

himself, uncertain whether he could make good his boasts, and mindful no doubt that he had once been put in the stocks in his native country, decided to bluff it out in Prague rather than chance his luck in London.

It seems possible that Dee may have been consulted officially about Kelley, for he made a note that Dyer had sent him twenty angells after there had been a reconciliation between them. As the cause of the rift between them had been Kelley himself, it is certain that his name would have figured in any reconciliation discussions.

A third daughter, Frances, was born on New Year's Day, 1592, and Dee, a meticulous recorder of domestic details and disbursements, if impractical in the broader aspects of financial matters, recorded: "Remember that all things is payed to our nurse at Barnes for the girll Francys Dee from her birth untill the ende of her eighth month."

There were two entries in the diary for March of that year—"The Pryvy Seale at night" and "The Great Seale" which apparently referred to a promise given by the Queen to William Aubrey, now Vicar-General and one of the Masters of Requests, about the possibility of offering Dee certain Welsh rectories when they fell vacant. They were only worth a total of seventy-five pounds and Dee later stated that he never received a penny from them.

Then came news from the continent that Edward Kelley had been imprisoned by the Emperor Rudolph. Tired of promises by Kelley that had not been made good, suspicious again of the scryer's dealings with evil spirits and his perpetual chicanery, Rudolph had him thrown into prison on charges of sorcery and heresy. On this occasion he seems not to have been treated too harshly, for he was allowed books and papers and to continue writing alchemical treatises. There was nothing particularly original about these; they were mainly a symposium of the writings of the ancient alchemists. To flatter the Emperor he dedicated one of his works to him—*The Stone of the Philosophers*. At the end of the treatise Kelley wrote that "if my teaching displeases you, you are still wandering astray from the true scope

and aim of this matter", a sentence which must have jarred on this autocratic Emperor. But there was one final megalomaniac touch to Kelley's appeal: "It always was and always will be the way of mankind to release Barabbas and crucify Christ."

During his captivity Kelley also wrote a paper entitled *The Theatur of Terrestrial Astronomy* and two lengthy poems on the theme of alchemy. It seems probable that he borrowed heavily from Dee's books in some of these works.

Still he and Dee corresponded. On 4 October, 1593, Dee noted that "Sir Edward Kelley [was] set at liberty by the Emperor," and the following March he had letters brought from Kelley and his brother by Francis Garland. Kelley, who had temporarily regained the Emperor's favour, even managed to persuade him to invite Dee back to Prague. Perhaps Kelley thought his only hope of success was by obtaining the assistance of his old master. Dee did not take up the invitation.

For some years Kelley led the existence of a wandering charlatan on the continent, sometimes in Bohemia, sometimes in Germany, living on his wits, doing horoscope casting, fortune-telling and still, when he found anyone gullible enough to listen to him, pretending to manufacture gold. But, if he did not succeed in convincing the Emperor or anyone else of his prowess, his letters to England continued to paint a prosperous picture. Philip Gawdy, writing to his brother from "my Lord of Shrewsbury's howse" in December, 1593, said that "Kelley is delivered out of prison and restored to his former estate and maketh gold as fast as a hen will cracke nuttes."⁷

Kelley's fate after this remains a mystery, for there are many accounts as to how he met his end. On 25 November, 1595, Dee recorded briefly in his diary "News that Sir Edward Kelley was slayne." It is certain that Kelley had again been arrested and clapped into jail in one of the Emperor's castles. One story is that when he learned he was imprisoned for life he tried to escape. He twisted his bedclothes into a rope and let himself out of his window, but fell to the ground, breaking both his legs and two of his ribs, and dying a few days later. There is even some evidence that Dee had intervened with the Queen to try to secure

his release and that an escape had been prepared from England. But other reports stated that he was killed in prison, or that he had died by his own hand.

Dee was characteristically generous to his old servant when he heard of his death. He mourned "one who might have wrought so manie wonders had he a minde to discipline his exceeding impatient desires; yet at the same time he was a talented scryer with whom I experienced wondrous things."

In looking back on this strange relationship over so many years, Dee must have had mixed feelings. There is no question that he suffered much at Kelley's hands in countless ways, treachery, foul deceit, covetousness, jealousy of his wife, malicious slander and ungratefulness. But he never quite shook off the attachment to his scryer and certainly, by his own admissions, he never found another scryer to equal Kelley, critical though he may have been of the latter's shortcomings in front of the crystal. One must deduce that in Dee's opinion Kelley had what we should now call extra-sensory perception, that he could in some way probe telepathically depths or heights which are beyond ordinary human understanding. To what extent this was possible we are no nearer to knowing today than in Tudor times. But it must have been officialdom which held them together so long; intermediaries in England seemed always anxious to keep them in partnership and it is a measure of Kelley's folly that he could not realise that he depended more on Dee than Dee did on him. It is easy now to dismiss as roguery or guesswork the fact that in their spiritual exercises they were able to verify lands that had not been properly charted, or point correctly to where gold could be found in the overseas possessions. The fact remains that such discoveries were afterwards acknowledged to be true, by men such as Hakluyt and Camden.

The problem of interpretation of their activities lies in separating the various types of vision—the telepathic, the psychedelic and those which were manipulated for espionage or counter-espionage purposes and, possible in the case of Kelley, for material gain or blackmail. In using the modern word psychedelic to describe some of the visions I am referring only to a few of

Kelley's visions. It is not an inapt word to describe the more lurid of his visionary fantasies because just as psychedelic visions today are produced from the taking of LSD, so in the sixteenth century witches smeared themselves with such ointments as aconite, cinquefoil, deadly nightshade and the juice of water hemlock, all of which are now recognised as delirium-producing drugs. To what extent Kelley indulged in drug-taking cannot be gauged, possibly mainly when he scried alone, but it is known that he used aconite and deadly nightshade to boost his morale when it was low. Indeed these concoctions are said to have given witches the hallucination of flying and gave rise to the conception that they flew through the air on broomsticks just as LSD induces a conviction that one can fly.

Dee was certainly aware of the more disreputable aspects of Kelley's scrying and the tricks he could play on the credulous and he made full use of them when indulging in scrying for espionage. When it came to serious scrying for the purpose of scientific or intellectual study, Dee had no alternative but to use Kelley. He had no better medium or scryer to work with, so he was compelled either to tolerate Kelley's whims, aberrations and deceptions, or to cease scrying altogether.

The placing of pictures in a crystal is an old trick of the charlatan scryer, noted by Besterman and other authorities on chrysoptomancy. Dee may have used the trick in his espionage seances; Hooke quoted Ashmole as having said that "Madimi was the symbolic figure in all Dee's Intelligence exercises and he so arranged things that she should appear to grow older as each year passed by, a feat of artificial magick which presented no problem for the ingenious doctor who could make a shew-stone reflect and magnify quite simple, minute paintings.³

That Dee was fully conscious of the strange effects which could be conjured up by a careful arrangement of glasses and mirrors has been demonstrated over and over again. There was the instance of the trick mirrors he showed the Queen; his mechanical beetle at Cambridge was said to have been enhanced in its realistic effects by mirrors; his diaries and his treatises reveal how he was irresistibly drawn by the magical effects of

certain types of glass. He also wrote that "a man to be curstly affrayed of his owne shadow; yea, so much to fear, that if you, being alone nere a certaine glasse, and proffer with dagger or sword, to foyne at the glasse, you shall suddenly be moved to give back (in maner) by reason of an image appearing in the ayre betweene you and the glasse with like hand, sword or dagger, and with like quicknes, foyning at your very eye, likewise as you do at the glasse. Straugne this is to heare of, but more mervailous to behold than these my wordes can signifie; and nevertheless by demonstration optically the order and cause thereof is certified; even so, as the effect in consequent."

But if visual tricks formed part and parcel of the espionage game when indulged in seances, one suspects that telepathy also played a part. If Kelley had marked talent for extra-sensory perception, Dee's mind, too, became attuned to that of his scribe and able to indulge in a certain elementary telepathy. Another theory is that Kelley had the gift of ventriloquism and that he used this to mislead Dee. Dee made an odd observation once that "to approach the spirits it is sometimes necessarie to employ the power of the belly voice that the Romans understode so that one can speke not as one, but as two, or even three at ones, conjuring up whichever sound shud appeale moste to the Spirituall Creaturs." Hooke interpreted this, not unreasonably, as a hint of ventriloquism, pointing out that the very word was taken from the Roman's belief in the fact that utterances could be made from deep in the belly without the mouth being moved. "Kelley," he asserted, "had the gift of conjuring angells up from the depths of his stomach." But there is no explanation why Kelley rather than Dee should have this gift, though if one bears in minde some of the dubious "voices" which Kelley conjured up it makes sense. If this were so, it seems probable that Dee would know this and exploit it.

But while making every allowance for the fact that some seances may have been faked, there should be no questioning of the sincerity, seriousness and authenticity of some of this pair's quests into the spiritual world. Kelley had sufficient talents to make

all things seem possible and Dee was apt at times to place too much reliance and faith in what his scrier saw.

On the other hand Dee was watchful, cautious and critical and his faith in Kelley's talents never blinded him to his scrier's defects, either intellectual or temperamental. He once told Kelley, making a careful note of what he said: "Your wilful phantasie perverts your reason and whereas you find fault with our instructors [presumably the angels], I, who much more narrowly peruse their words, know that they give direct answers to my questions, except indeed when you misreport them, or I make a mistake in hearing or writing."

This again reveals Dee not as the completely starry-eyed dabbler in the occult, but one who was always analysing what he heard and saw.

"The Golden Disc of the Vision of the Four Castles seen at Mortlake by Edward Kelley on the morning of 12 June 1584" is preserved on an engraved gold plate in the British Museum. It depicts the processions of Kings, Princes and Seniors with "Angels of the Aethyrs", sketched by Kelley, though Dee is believed to have done the engraving. Of this golden disc Mr. C. A. Burland says: "It is a typically sound vision of a person who has become aware of the inner strength of his own personality. It is a symbol of unity seen on the path towards integration."

Kelley had all the theatrical sense, the gift of self-dramatisation and the flair for creating a bizarre atmosphere which are the essentials of the more flamboyant type of scrier. In this respect he resembled Crowley. But he also had a remarkably retentive memory, a mind which was a store-house of odds and ends of information which could be sorted out subconsciously and brought to the surface when he scried. This was invaluable in espionage, but equally useful when serious spiritual experiments were being conducted. Sometimes he and Dee seemed to be playing a game of obscure cross-references when they scried alone. Kelley would record a list of facts and Dee, with his keen mind, would relate them logically into some coherent purpose, often pausing to check references in his books, or work out from the Enochian language the true significance of what Kelley reported.

A LAST PLEA TO KING JAMES

DEE CONTINUED to enjoy the confidence and company of those at Court even after Walsingham died, but this brought him few rewards. He dined with the Lord Treasurer and Sir Robert and Sir Thomas Cecil; the Lord Treasurer sent him gifts of venison. He was entertained by the Countess of Cumberland, Lord Willoughby and the Countess of Kent. The Archbishop of Canterbury called on him and on one occasion he noted that "my wife and seven children [were] before the Queene at Thisellworth."

Yet he still sometimes helped other people, despite his own dependence on others' financial aid. On 7 September, 1592, for example, he lent "Barthilmew Hikman £12 to pay on Michaelmas Day next to discharge the bond for his brother-in-law." On the other hand there may have been something more than altruism in this case, for Hickman was a scryer.

Towards the end of the year he pressed his case for damages for the losses he had suffered. He drew up a lengthy personal statement which he entitled *The Compendious Rehearsal*, which not only described the blows which fate had dealt him, but commented on the fickleness of his erstwhile patrons in time of adversity. It was a pathetic document, claiming that Dee, who had given his life to the pursuit of knowledge, "who had meant all the truth, sincerity, fidelity and piety to God, Queene and countrie..." saw himself in old age without any provisions. Among the services to the Queen which he mentioned was consultation with physicians on a journey to the continent concerning the Queen's health. He listed the damage done to his library

(£2,000), loss of chemical apparatus (£200), quadrant (£20) and magnet (£33).

Sir Thomas Gorge and Mr. Secretary Wooley, who had been appointed Commissioners to inquire into his case by the Queen, went to his house at Mortlake to consider his evidence.

A report was made to the Queen, who temporised by sending the Countess of Warwick over to Mortlake with the news that Elizabeth had granted Dee one hundred marks and next day he got the money. Dee recorded that Sir Thomas Gorge "had dealt very honourably with me in that cause", but apart from vague promises nothing else seems to have been done to assist him.

The ecclesiastical authorities seemed more friendly disposed to him. On 13 October he had shown the Archbishop of Canterbury two "bokes of blasphemie againste Christ and the Holy Ghoste, desyryng him to cause them to be confuted: one was Christian Franken, printed 1585 in Poland, the other was by one Sombius, printed at Ingoldstad in 1582."¹

Early in 1593 Dee was again short of ready cash, for he noted that he "borrowed £10 of Thomas Digges", which shows he must have been in close touch with the most celebrated English mathematician of the day.

His diary in the next few years contains little of interest except one enigmatic note which suggests he was once again turning his attention to scrying: "Robert Wood—visited with spirituall creaturs had comfort by conference."

On 8 January, 1595, through the influence of Archbishop Whitgift, the wardenship of Christ's College, Manchester, was offered to Dee. This offer was confirmed by the Queen and Dee, without much enthusiasm, accepted the post. It meant leaving his beloved Mortlake and the Thames which he missed greatly, and entering a provincial sphere of life in which he must have felt sadly out of touch with politics and politicians. This was an ecclesiastical institution and a particularly narrow one, dominated by Puritans with whom Dee was soon at odds. His duties as Warden were considerable and left him little time to study and the post was worth very little. It was a meagre reward for a life-

time of service. Soon he was commenting with some bitterness on the interruptions to his studies by the "cares and cumbers" of "this defaced and disordered college".

Manchester in these days was already a prosperous town in which many Flemish weavers had settled. It had a cloth mill and market and there were many rich merchants. But it bore all the hall-marks of extreme Protestant bigotry, narrow-mindedness and provincialism. The college had four Fellows, two chaplains and choristers. Its revenues had shrunk and it was desperately short of funds, as there were continual disputes over tithe payments. What made matters more difficult for Dee was that the Warden was supposed to be a clergyman and, as he was a layman, he had to pay curates to carry out the strictly clerical duties.

Sooner or later it was bound to happen: the stories of Dee's past reached Manchester and rumour-mongers began to whisper against his interest in occultism. This may have arisen partly from the fact that he lent some books on demonology to the Justices who were investigating a case of alleged witchcraft. He was also consulted about a suspected "conjurer" named Hartley, who had attempted to drive away the evil spirits from a poor woman and her children who were all grievously troubled with fits. He "sharply rebuked" Hartley and told him to desist from his unlawful art. But on another occasion he declined absolutely to try to exorcise certain demons by whom seven persons were said to be possessed. He merely ordered them to apply to "a godly minister". Caution and fear of being too involved in such matters may have been the reasons for this decision.

He must have written to the Queen complaining about life in Manchester, or asking to come back to London, as there was a note in his diary in 1595 mentioning that the Queen had told Dee that she was sorry Manchester was "so far from hens, but that some better thing neer hand shall be fownd for me." He did not get on very well with the Fellows, but he made the most of his somewhat frustrating life in the town and the monotony was relieved to some extent by visits from friends in London. He paid fairly frequent visits to the capital, dining with such people as Dyer and Sir Walter Raleigh.

One of his first acts on arriving in Manchester was to issue an order for the town to be "measured and mapped". Dee had a passion for maps and was always insistent that every town, village and stretch of coast-line in the whole country should be precisely mapped. He also wrote a history of Christ's College, Manchester, and *De Horizonte Aeternitatis*, his fiftieth and last known work. He was, in his old age, beginning to revise his ideas and opinions on many subjects in the light of new discoveries and he talked a good deal about a final work on the distinction between "the body and the spirit." But, as far as one can tell, this was never completed.

There is an odd note on hire purchase in Tudor times in his diary for 1596: "John Norton, stationer, £10 down and £10 yerely for bokes, till £53 14s. 8d. paid."

He tried hard through Sir Edward Dyer and Raleigh to make his influence felt again in the political spheres, but apart from the fact that his renewed plea for action against the encroachment of foreign fishermen in the North Sea and the Channel coast was raised in Parliament, no action was taken until the following reign.

His political ideas often seemed too generalised and imprecise for the legal minds of Tudor times. In fact, of course, he was deliberately generalising simply to spotlight a problem and to avoid its advantages being lost in too great detail. He was still in advance of his age on many subjects, especially on his revolutionary proposal for a new legal basis for boundaries at sea. Dee wanted these to be determined by the half-way line at sea or in the ocean between two countries. He was strongly opposed to the Papal division of the New World, as propounded in the last decade of the previous century. A strong imperialist—indeed, a hogger of territorial claims for England overseas—his ingenious scheme would have given England dominance over several seas and oceans.

Towards the end of the Manchester period of his life a sour note crept into his diary. "Trubblesome days abowt Mr. Palmer the curate," he wrote on one occasion, and, another time, "I visited the Grammar Schole [Manchester] and fownd imperfec-

tion in all and everie of the scholars to my great grief." One wonders what Paton would have thought! Then again he recorded imperiously: "I willed the Fellows to come and see me by nine the next day," after which he recorded tersely that "they came and were pacified."

In 1598 he returned to London for more than a year, principally to negotiate business on behalf of Christ's College, though this may well have been an excuse to escape from provincial life. His diary was not nearly so detailed in these later years and so one is left to guess at much of what he did, but from certain obscure references it seems that he conducted seances occasionally and continued with his occult studies. Crystal-gazing was indulged in with one Francis Nichols, who had been one of his pupils in astrology years before, and also with Bartholomew Hickman, whose powers of telepathy and scrying he claimed to have detected when Bartholomew was only a boy.

But scrying can so often start with talent and end in subconscious delusions. Flair and insight are often the parents of deceit and uncontrolled imagination. Even intuition needs the gift of self-criticism to keep it on the path of sanity and realism. Dee's tragedy was that he had a keenly analytical mind, but could not scry, and nearly all his scryers lacked his intellectual powers. Even Bartholomew Hickman failed him in the end, for Dee referred to Bartholomew's "untrue actions" and he added that "All Barthilmew's reportes of sight and hering spirituall wer burnt. A copy of the first part, which was afterwards fownd, was burnt before me and my wife."

Dee became increasingly critical of spiritual experiments in his latter days and always on the watch for any false note. He never gave his later scryers anything like the latitude which he appeared to allow Kelley, though here an explanation may lie partially in the fact that Dee was no longer engaged in espionage and that whatever experiments he carried out in scrying were solely for the purpose of acquiring knowledge.

He diligently recorded his dreams until after the turn of the century. Once he wrote: "This night I had the vision and shew of many bokes in my dream and among the rest was one great

volume thik in large quarto, new printed, on the first page whereof as a title in great letters was printed '*Notus in Iudaea Deus.*' Many other bokes methought I saw new printed on very strange arguments." And again on 6 August, 1600, he had "a dream after midnight of my working of the Philosopher's Stone with others, my dreame was after midnight towards day."

In 1600 he returned to Manchester, but found little opportunity for bringing about the changes in Christ's College which he considered so important. No one was prepared to find the money for his reforms and though Dee would gladly have paid for them out of his own pocket he no longer had the funds for such benevolence. Lilly declared that Dee was so poor at this time that he was obliged to sell books from his library. He was frequently borrowing money by pledging cups, bowls, silver and even glassware, as well as some of his wife's rings.³

By now two of his sons had died—Michael, on his father's birthday in 1594, and Theodore in Manchester in 1601. In Arthur, his eldest son, he had the consolation of a devoted and highly intelligent heir, who in 1602 married Isabella Preswich, the daughter of a Manchester Justice of the Peace. This young couple—Arthur was twenty-four and his bride nineteen—lived with Arthur's parents for a while and John Dee cast horoscopes for his grandchildren as they were born. In the Sloane MSS. Collection two of these horoscopes still exist, for Margarita (born 1603) and Jane (1604). They are beautifully written out on vellum leaves in a small square manuscript volume and have a wealth of additional information which in effect provided for each child a miniature encyclopaedia of general knowledge, with anatomological sketches of the human body, a list of astrological signs, medical notes and a miscellany of facts and figures on the weather, metals and minerals and hermetic lore.

Towards the end of 1602 Elizabeth showed signs of a rapid deterioration in her health so that Sir John Harington wrote to his wife: "Our dear Queen doth now bear show of human infirmity; too fast for that evil which we shall get by her death, and too slow for that good which she shall get by her releasement from pains and misery."

Yet Christmas was passed at Whitehall with the Queen apparently in gay spirits, even dancing a coranto. News must have reached Dee that the Queen's health was breaking up for on 14 January, when she was indisposed with a cold for two days, he wrote and warned her to "beware of Whitehall" and its damp in this period of the year. A few days later in a veritable deluge the Queen moved to Richmond Palace, saying that this was "the warm winter-box to shelter my old age".

By the following month it was clear that the Queen was far from well and she lay listless and forlorn on her pillows and she would not listen to her physicians but turned instead to her spiritual adviser, Archbishop Whitgift—"my black husband", as she called him. On 24 March in the early hours of the morning she passed peacefully away.

For Dee the Queen's death was a final blow to all his hopes. He was devoted to her and the personal loss of a Sovereign he had known since her girlhood as a princess in what was more or less exile was hard to bear. It would be true to say that he loved her almost as deeply as his wife. As long as Elizabeth was there Dee had hope of some improved preferment, or a post back in London. But under James VI of Scotland, who was now proclaimed King of England, a sinister question mark posed itself against his future. Dee was instinctively mistrustful of the new Sovereign and feared that he would be far less broadminded towards practitioners in natural magic than Elizabeth had been.

The new century saw the beginning of a reaction away from the enlightened, inquiring liberalism of the neo-Platonists and Renaissance Magia and the mounting of a nation-wide drive against all suspected of witchcraft and magical practices. This witch-hunting culminated in the rise to power of Matthew Hopkins, commonly known as the "Witchfinder General", who used torture and brain-washing to extort confessions from his victims.

King James himself was vehemently opposed to witchcraft and therefore naturally suspicious of even natural magic. But, in fairness to the King, it must be admitted that he had had unfortunate experiences of the manifestations of witchcraft in his youth and as a young man. A number of plots said to be based on

occult practices had been launched against his life. There was the case of a witch named Agnes Sampson, who was ordered by Bothwell, to kill James by bewitching him. There was also the case of Geillis Duncan, another witch with designs against him, and, unfortunately for Dee, the stories that Dee himself had been implicated in occult practices to prevent his marriage to the Danish princess. Though this was only wild talk, one may be sure that James, who took a personal interest in investigating all witchcraft reports, had heard all about it.

There certainly was a secret society practising magic as a weapon against the King and among its members were the Earl of Bothwell, who at one time had hopes of succeeding James on the throne of Scotland, Dr. Fian, an Edinburgh schoolmaster, who was the secretary and registrar of a group of witches who used a church for their nocturnal meetings and plottings. Black magic was invariably mixed up in these proceedings and Bothwell when he fled to Italy actually wrote letters denouncing Christianity.⁴

All these incidents led to James writing his *Three Books on Demonology*, which he based on his personal examination of witches who had confessed to malpractices. Writing about Agnes Sampson's confession, James stated: "The fearful abounding at this time in this country of these detestable slaves of the Divil, the Witches or enchanters, hath moved me (beloved reader) to dispatch in post this following Treatise of mine, not in any wise (as I protest) to serve for a show of learning and ingene, but only (moved of conscience) to press thereby so far as I can to resolve the doubting hearts of many, both that such assaults of Satan are most severely practised, and that the instruments thereof merit most severely to be punished."

There was much else in James' writings based on the confession of Dr. Fian, who admitted that he had made a pact with the Devil to cause the King's ship to be struck by a storm on his journey to Norway.

In these circumstances it was not perhaps surprising that in the first year of his reign on 19 March, 1604, James asked Parliament to enact a Statute which would help "uproot the monstrous

evils of enchanters." It was a far more drastic law than any that had preceded it. "If any person," it stated, "shall use, practise, or exercise any invocation or conjuration of any evil and wicked spirit, or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil and wicked spirit, to or for any intent and purpose; or take up any dead man, woman or child out of their graves or the skin, bone or any part of any dead person, to be used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery or enchantment, whereby any person shall be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined or lamed in his or her body, or any part thereof; that then every such offender, their aiders, abettors and counsellors shall suffer the pains of death."⁵

Though the Bishops of the House of Lords found the statute "imperfect", it was rushed through Parliament and put on the Statute Book on 9 June, 1604. Obviously James was anxious to check any further plots of this nature such as had been revealed by the trials of the Scottish witches.

There was nothing in the Act which need have worried Dee personally, or given him reason to fear action would be taken against him, though Kelley, had he been alive, might well have been covered by the statute. But the atmosphere at Court may well have given Dee cause to fear he might be suspected, for there were also a number of tirades and pamphlets against even innocent practitioners of natural magic. So Dee decided that it was preferable to come into the open and seek the King's goodwill rather than to lie low in Manchester and leave himself open to the charges of the local Puritans. On 5 June he presented a petition to the King at Greenwich Palace, asking that he should be cleared of slanderous charges in a public trial.

He requested the King "to cause your Highnesse said servant to be tryed and cleared of that horrible and damnable and to him most grievous and dammageable sclander, generally and for these many yeares past, in this Kingdom raysed and continued, by report and print against him, namely he is or hath bin a conjuror or caller or invocator of divels."

Three days later Dee took a further step to establish his innocence and win publicity for his cause by presenting a petition

in verse to Parliament, urging them to pass "An Act Generall against sclaunder, with a specially penal order for John Dee, his case."

Thus Dee at the end of a long and honourable life was forced to fight to establish his good name, though it must be admitted that his fears were probably groundless and that nobody of any consequence seriously thought of charging him with being a conjuror. To some his plea smacked of persecution mania and perhaps it was so. But one must remember that Dee had seen the swift and violent changes in opinion and political climate which had been wrought by a change of monarchs in the past. In favour with the boy King Edward VI, he had suffered under Mary's bloody rule, and even under Elizabeth he had found his fortunes fluctuating with changes at Court.

Certainly his plea for a law against slander was not out of place and it would have been a safeguard for the innocent and the feeble-minded who in years to come were to suffer cruelly from the Witchcraft Statute which was often cited under pretexts of personal vengeance, sadism, espionage and terrorism, resulting in diabolical persecution and the burning and stoning of harmless lunatics condemned as witches and conjurors.

Nothing was done about his petition to the King or his plea to Parliament. Tragically, and perhaps the cruellest blow of all to the old man, they were ignored. But at least no action was taken against him. There are some grounds for believing that James gave instructions that Dee was to be left in peace. It could have been that James, a diligent scholar himself, had been impressed by Dee's record and his learning. Both Lilly and Hooke claimed that Dee had seen in the crystal the outlines of the Gunpowder Plot by Guido Fawkes and others against King and Parliament and even given the names of the traitors and details of their plot. There is no confirmation of this story even though it was hinted that Dee was the author of the anonymous letter which informed the Government of the plot and led to the searching of the cellars of Parliament. It seems doubtful whether Dee, living at Manchester, was sufficiently *au fait* in the world of intelligence in these days of his decline.

Occult plots against the King did not cease entirely after the passing of the Witchcraft Statute. Dr. Simon Foreman, an astrologer living in Lambeth, was hired by Lady Essex, a nymphomaniac lady of the Court, to obtain the love of the King's homosexual favourite, Lord Rochester, by means of occultism. It was true that Lady Essex paid frequent visits to the astrologer and that Rochester did in fact fall in love with her.

Towards the end of 1604 the plague came to Manchester and in the spring of the following year Jane Dee, having nursed her children through the epidemic, herself was stricken down by the disease and died. She was buried on 23 March in the grave-yard of the Collegiate Church of St. Mary in Manchester. Whether some of the children died later as a result of the plague is not known; nothing further was recorded about Madimi or any of the other children except Katherine and Arthur. It was Katherine who took on the running of the household and who faithfully looked after her father for the rest of his life.

Ill health caused Dee's resignation from the wardenship at Christ's College in 1605. He returned to Mortlake, broken in health and spirit, never really recovering from the death of his wife. His poverty was such that he now had to sell books to raise the money for food. He turned his attention increasingly to spiritual matters and once more indulged in seances. Bartholomew Hickmen's services were sought again and there were records of fleeting visions of the Archangel Raphael, the spirit of healing, and others. Dee was reassured by Raphael about his physical state and for a time after this he recovered in health.

One hot summer's day when he was staying at the Three Keys inn in King Street, Westminster, there was another vision of Raphael, which Dee duly recorded. Dee had been hoping for a windfall, but Raphael told him to forget about worldly things and that "the Emperor of Emperors will be thy comfort".

Raphael also hinted at "a long journey to friends beyond the sea", where the secrets of the universe which he had sought so long would eventually be revealed to him. Perhaps Raphael's description of the journey overseas was purely allegorical and meant to convey the fact that Dee would have no need of money

because shortly he would be making the final journey of all to his Maker. Or perhaps his scryer was humouring him, for Raphael went on to suggest that in his last days he would not want for anything and would be provided for where he would "be able to do God's service".

Dee himself imagined he would make a journey to the continent and that his friend, John Pontoys, another disciple and scryer, would accompany him, as well as his daughter, Katherine. Of course he was far too ill and in any event too impoverished to make such a trip.

For the last few months of his life he made hardly any notes in his diary, merely ticking off each week as it passed. The end came at Mortlake in December, 1608, surrounded by his daughter, his son and John Pontoys. He was perhaps most mourned in the village of Mortlake itself, where the people spoke of him as a kindly benefactor and a mender of quarrels. Great tribute was paid to his talents as a peace-maker; to the end of his days he could not bear strife in his midst and was one of the first to intervene with sound advice when neighbours quarrelled.⁵

Thus the great scholar and mystic, who sought the "company and information of the Angels of God", died firmly believing that the secrets of the universe were still within his grasp and that, though he had proved unworthy to receive them in his lifetime, beyond the grave they would be vouchsafed to him. In his own way he had initiated a form of psychical research and experimented with spiritualism, and in his own mind there clearly existed in a life after death that "land of pure delight where saints immortal dwell".

His son bravely carried on the torch of such psychical research in his own career. Dee, in drawing up Arthur's horoscope, had prophesied that the boy would win great fortune overseas at the hand of a "great Prince". It proved to be a correct forecast. Arthur, after being given the grant of the Chapter clerkship in Manchester in 1600, devoted himself to medical studies and practised medicine in that town. He described himself as "a doctor in physic" and in 1614 became physician of Thomas Sutton's newly-founded hospital, the Charterhouse, an appoint-

ment which Arthur described as "a tribute by Thomas Sutton to my father's sagacitie in giving timlie warnings abowt the Armada". Like his father, Arthur dabbled in magic and alchemy and was also an astrologer.

In 1621 Arthur was recommended by the English Court to become the personal physician of the Czar Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov, becoming a great favourite and confidant of that monarch. But in 1634 he lost favour at the Russian Court for some reason⁷ and returned to England where he served as physician to Charles I and later settled at Norwich. His close friend in Norwich, Sir Thomas Browne, wrote that Arthur Dee swore on oath that he had seen the transmutation of metals into gold carried out in Bohemia.⁸

Arthur spent much time in his later years trying to recover his father's missing manuscripts which were supposed to be scattered as far afield as Prague, Rome, Brussels and Amsterdam. Sir William Boswell, the English Resident in Holland, had some of these in his possession, but declined to part with them. Other papers of Dee's had been impounded as State Papers, according to Hooke, and had since either been destroyed, or "filched during the Civil Wars".⁹

Casaubon succeeded where Arthur failed and the latter was deeply angered at Casaubon's treatment of his father's work in the book which was published some eight years before Arthur's death: 'It did great harme to the memorie of a great man and was both ignorant and mischievous', was Arthur's verdict.

It cannot be said with any certainty that all the manuscripts credited to Dee were in fact his work. For example *No Triple Alamanack*, published in 1591, was the work of John Dade, not John Dee, as has often been stated. Some of the tracts, such as the *Treatise of the Rosie Crucian Secrets* in the Harley MS., are, on closer examination, very doubtfully the work of Dee. In assessing some of Dee's works, especially the angelic visions, it is necessary to cast one's net very deeply indeed, as in some cases annotations, interpretations and notes on the original are confused and confusing. One cannot be sure to what extent a form of censorship, official or unofficial, and influenced to some

extent by inhibitions of earlier ages about revealing the processes of Secret Service work, had distorted some of the work of commentators and interpreters. In the British Museum a copy of Casaubon's work contains marginal notes in the handwriting of the Rev. William Shippen, of Stockport, in 1683. There is a note that the Government had thought of seizing all copies of the book, but that it sold too quickly for effective action to be taken.

Aubrey, in his biographical notes, stated: "Meredith Lloyd sayes that John Dee's printed booke of Spirits is not above the third part of what was writt, which were in Sir Robert Cotton's library; many whereof were much perished by being buried, and Sir Robert Cotton bought the field to digge after it".

But some of Dee's papers, mainly those of his later years, which contained presumably recollections of earlier years and notes on experiments, were retained by Arthur Dee and, if these had been preserved intact, might well have thrown valuable light on the Queen's Astrologer. There are echoes of his father's notes in some of the writings of Arthur Dee during his stay in Moscow, which, seemingly, was the period of his life in which he wrote most. It was in Russia that Arthur wrote *Fasciculus Chemicus*, expressing the "ingress, progress and egresses of the Secret Hermetick Science", which was published in Paris in 1631. Some of his father's notes Arthur translated into Russian and they were said to have come into Rasputin's possession after which they were removed by some of the Romanovs, who claimed they belonged to the Russian royal family. It is from these papers that some of the gaps in the narrative of the Dee story have been filled in for the first time in this book.¹⁰

Unfortunately after Arthur Dee's death his remaining notes and any manuscripts belonging to his father seem to have been dissipated among his numerous children—he had seven sons and six daughters—and, except for odd scraps of information here and there, to have been lost to posterity.¹¹ Arthur's son, Rowland, had possession of some of the notes which he passed on to his son, Duncan Dee (1657–1720), who was chosen common serjeant of the City of London in 1700.

But one must be grateful for the vast amount of material on Dee which has been preserved, for far more is known about him than about the much more illustrious William Shakespeare. In the light of what we do know, no one could assert that Kelley wrote the "angelic conversations" or that Digges really made the mathematical and astronomical discoveries set out by Dee. In this respect at least his reputation has been more kindly handled than Shakespeare's at the hands of his traducers. The Queen's Astrologer may have moved in mysterious ways, but he was in many other respects a clearly defined character, typically Elizabethan in his boldness and his robust patriotism, a great and imaginative Renaissance scholar, a good and kindly man, always hungry for knowledge, frail enough to pursue many intellectual mirages, yet honest enough to admit his failures. He had that pride in ancestry that was one of the strengths of the emerging middle classes of Tudor England, yet was the antithesis of the petty bourgeois.

Here was a complete man in every respect of that overworked phrase, meticulously conventional at Court, yet with some of the qualities of the uncaring Bohemian. Almost every aspect of his character could form the theme for an enlightening essay. His religious outlook, his inquiring ecumenical spirit, his insistence on a religious approach to scrying and experiment mark him out as almost as fascinating a character as Sir Thomas More. As an adviser on naval matters and an imperialist planner he deserves at least a chapter in Britain's naval history. But it is Dee the dreamer, the seer of visions, the romantic Hermetist that causes one not only to look at Tudor England in a new light, but to ponder on what lessons Dee might have for the psychedelic experimenters of today. For if Hermetist is the right word to apply to him, there was no other Hermetist so practical, so sober and so far-seeing in his life-time.

Mr. Christopher Mayhew, M.P., has referred to an experiment he carried out when he took "an L.S.D.-type hallucinogenic drug and had what was even then called a 'psychedelic experience'." "Part of my motive", he wrote, "was to test a theory...that there is no clear dividing line between mystical experiences

induced by sanctity, mental sickness and hallucinogenic drugs... as Dr. Osmond proved my physical and mental condition, even as the tea was brought in, I experienced the beatific vision, eternal life, heaven. It was all there, as the saints had described it—ecstasy, timelessness, illumination and unity, or, if you prefer it, de-personalization, time disturbances, light hallucinations and the disintegration of the ego.

“The great religious mystics, who knew nothing about L.S.D., knew well that the symptoms of sainthood and insanity are sometimes disturbingly similar, and often tried to lay down a dividing line between them”.¹²

This is dangerous ground on which to trespass, for it is as much of a no-man’s-land today as it was in Dee’s time—perhaps more so because one has to set the faith and purely intellectual approach of the Renaissance Neo-Platonists against the reliance on artificial methods and drug-taking among the modern experimenters, whether they be medical, scientific or merely “hippies”. If the former erred in deifying their visions, the latter undoubtedly take greater risks in deifying mysticism by chemistry.

Thus, with and through Dee, one seems Tudor mysticism in the light of modern science and modern psychotical mysticism being submitted to the tests of a critical appraiser of scrying and the commonsense of Saint Teresa of Avila. With Dee one sees much of the present and not a little of the distant future in his own past. It is like looking at the whole of eternity through the shewstone of Elizabethan England.

**SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO
CHAPTERS AND APPENDIX ON
CRYPTOGRAPHY**

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO CHAPTERS

CHAPTER I

1. The "EveR" was a play on the initials of *Elizabetha Regina*.
2. Seven was regarded as a "secret" and sacred number and was frequently used by Hermetists and others to denote a sense of the occult. See "angelic conversations" in Chap. 9: "7 comprehendeth the Secrets of Heaven and earth . . . etc."
3. *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, by Charles Mackay.
4. Dee quite frequently ended some of the "angelic conversations" with indications of a call by his family to eat. See Bibliography & Sources for the origin of this quotation: *Divers Curious Narrations of Dr. John Dee*, which is an English translation of a Russian MS. by Dee's son, Arthur, which, presumably must have been partly translated from Dee's own Anglo-Latin-Enochian notes. The English translation here gives "O. SV," but one must assume it should be O.S.V., or *Ol Sonf Vorsg*, an Enochian invocation.
5. See *Forest of Dean*, Nicholls, London, 1858. Also *Some Miscellaneous Anecdotes concerning the History of the Forest of Dean*, a thesis by Charles Deacon, 1897.

CHAPTER 2

1. Several records testify that John Dee was born at Mortlake, though the Rev. Jonathan Williams claimed he was a native of the parish of Bugaildu, near Knighton, Radnorshire. Dee gave his own date of birth as 13 July, 1527, at Mortlake, in the *Compendious Rehearsal*, ch. i.
2. Radnorshire Transactions, vol. ii, p. 4; vol. iii, p. 10-15; vol. vii, p. 69; vol. xxi. pp. 43-46. Also see *Cambro-Britannicae Cyrmrae-caeve Linguae Institutiones*, 1592, p. 60.
3. Radnorshire Transactions.
4. *A True and Faithful Relation*, by Meric Casaubon. Strype (*Annals*, ii, 353, folio) described Rowland Dee as a "gentleman sewer" to

Henry VIII, adding that he had been "indifferently" treated at Court.

5. Rymer, *Foedera*, ed. 1713, xv, 107.
6. *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, by D. P. Walker.
7. *De Occulta Philosophia*, by Cornelius Agrippa, I, vi, p. ix.
8. *The Haven-Finding Art*, by Prof. E. G. R. Taylor. Pedro Nunez was recognised on the continent as a great authority on navigation, but hardly heard of in England.

CHAPTER 3

1. Cited by Prof. Taylor in *The Haven-Finding Art*.
2. *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee*, edited by J. O. Halliwell.
3. Dee, Cary and Butler were the accused, according to State Paper records. All were acquitted. See also *Examinations and Writings of J. Philpot*, ed. Eden, pp. 69, 80.
4. *Private Diary*, 10 Sept., 1579.
5. *Ibid.*, 1581.

CHAPTER 4

1. This is a summary of Dee's definitions of various forms of magic and the theme is expounded in the *Monad*. It is also taken in part from an unpublished MS. of Dee in which he attempted to vindicate Roger Bacon, of whom he wrote that "he coule dooe such thynges as were wonderful in sight of most people".
2. *His Life and Times*, William Lilly.
3. *Leicester's Commonwealth* (anon.), 1584. This book contained a violent attack on all in Leicester's employment, Dee and Thomas Allen being accused of "conjuring" and "Julio the Italian" and "Lopas the Jew" being charged with "the art of destroying children in women's bellies by poysoning".
4. The *D.N.B.* states "at some period in his life Dee visited St. Helena and wrote an account of his voyage (Ayscough, Cat. of MSS., p. 873, Cotton MS. Appendix xlvii, 2 parts. I. R. F. Calder expresses the opinion that Dee made only one major voyage of discovery and that was with Frobisher in quest of the North-west Passage.
5. Arthur Dee cited this statement of his father's, mentioning Bermuda, St. Helena and "Zinbadh's Isle" as islands scheduled by his father as being vital to British interests. For geographers it must be interesting to speculate where "Zinbadh's Isle" was! This note appears in *Divers Curious Narrations of Dr. John Dee* (see Bibliography). One wonders whether the voyage to St. Helena was something from the "angelic conversations".

CHAPTER 5

1. This correspondence with Cecil is contained in the Elizabethan State Papers, vol. xxvii, no. 63. It is also printed in vol. i of the Philobiblon Society, edited by R. W. Grey.
2. The certificate from Cecil is mentioned in the fifth chapter of Dee's *Compendious Rehearsal*, an account of some of the services he rendered to the Crown.
3. *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, by D. P. Walker.
4. *Posthumous Works of Robert Hooke*, edited by Waller.
5. *De Occulta Philosophia*, Agrippa.
6. The intermingling of false figures in his codes seems to have been a feature of Dee's cipher-making. Palpably wrong and inexplicable figures appear in the "angelic tables"; see Chap. 15.

CHAPTER 6

1. *Dr. John Dee*, by G. M. Hort.
2. Cited by Conyers Read in his *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*. See also Camden: *Annals*, 1635, p. 394, and Webb's *History of Chislehurst*, where Walsingham's will is printed in full.
3. *Queen Elizabeth I*, by Sir John E. Neale.
4. *Private Diary*.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 7

1. Dee's diaries are strangely silent on this first marriage.
2. Radnorshire *Transactions*, vol. XXV, pp. 15, 16. Also Lansdowne MS. 19, art. 38.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Peniarth MS. 252. Also Radnorshire *Transactions*, vol. xxvi. pp. 40-42.
5. Crest granted 3 July, 1576: Gu. a lion ramp, or, within a bordure indented of the second. Crest—a lion sejant guard, or, holding in the dexter gamb a cross formée fitchée az. on the cross a label with this motto—*Hic labor*, and resting the sinister gamb on a pyramid ar. thereon a label with this motto—*Hoc Opus*.
6. Cited by Prof. Taylor in *The Haven-Finding Art*.
7. This was the sole voyage of discovery by Dee to which Calder referred. The affair of Frobisher's "Black Stone" is told in Manhart's *English Search for a North-west Passage*. Dee refers to the quest for the North-west Passage in his *Atlantick Discourse*. See also State Papers Dom. Eliz. vol. 123, no. 50, and *Mariner's Mirror*, xv, 1929, pp. 125-30, xvi, 1930, pp. 134-51.

8. This passage could contain an inaccurate translation by Dee from sources he had consulted, or, more likely, be an inaccurate description of Dee's diary notes.

CHAPTER 8

1. See *Cal. Colonial Addenda*, 1574-1674, no. 4, and *American Historical Review*, XIII, pp. 480-500.
2. Cited by Conyers Read in *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*.
3. *Private Diary*.
4. *Ibid*.
5. *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, Walker.
6. *Crystal-Gazing*, by Theodore Besterman.
7. *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, by Charles Mackay.
8. *Crystal-Gazing*, by Besterman.
9. *Human Personality*, by F. W. H. Myers, London, 1903.
10. *Biological Radio*, a thesis by C.R.F. Casserley, Cambridge University, 1961.
11. London Dialectical Society: *Report on Spiritualism*, 1871. See also *On the Ancient Magic Crystal and Its Connexion with Mesmerism*, by F. Hockley, *The Zoist*, London, 1849.
12. In *Doctoris Dee Mysteriorum Libri Sex* [sic], Sloane MS. 3188, f. 59b, there is a reference to "the great Christaline Globe". The variety of Dee's shew-stones suggest that he must have employed them for a variety of purposes. In addition to the shew-stone already mentioned which has been displayed in the British Museum for many years is his "magic mirror", which was acquired by the Museum in 1966 and is now exhibited in the King Edward VII Gallery. The mirror is a black polished slab of obsidian, of Aztec origin, brought back to Europe after the conquest of Mexico by Cortes and no doubt among the sundry instruments and objects that Dee acquired in the Netherlands. This is believed to be the shew-stone that was in the possession of Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill.

CHAPTER 9

1. *Private Diary*.
2. See also William Lilly's *History of His Life and Times*.
3. Cited by Dame Edith Sitwell in *The Queens and The Hive*.
4. *Ibid*.
5. *Ibid*.
6. Mr. C. A. Burland in a letter to the author, 2 Nov., 1966.
7. Dee had previously noted ten such places in the letter to Burghley, applying for Letters Patent for treasure trove.

8. See *Cal. Scottish*, 1574-81, p. 650. Names as well as numbers were used as codes. For example James of Scotland was also "Millenarium", Hunsdon was "Stratiotes" and Morton "Empe-docles".
9. Evidence of witchcraft attempts on the life of James VI of Scotland is found in *Scotland Social and Domestic*, Rogers, p. 276, and Pitcairn, op. cit., vol. 1, pt. iii, p. 246.
10. Ibid.

CHAPTER 10

1. Professor Alexander Zimin, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences.
2. *Crystal Gazing*, by Besterman.
3. See *Libri Mysteriorum* and Casaubon.
4. *Libri Mysteriorum*.
5. *A True and Faithful Relation*, Casaubon.

CHAPTER 11

1. See *The Equinox*, vol. I, No. 7, p. 231 et seq. Also *The Golden Dawn* (Israel Regardie), vol. IV, p. 299.
2. *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*, by John Symonds.
3. Cited by Jean Overton Fuller in *The Dilemma of Victor Neuburg*.
4. Ibid. See also Crowley's *The Vision and The Voice*.
5. See Symonds and Fuller.
6. Ibid.
7. *The Equinox* was Aleister Crowley's own occult magazine, which contained many invocatory poems as well as articles on the occult and a Cabbalistic Dictionary, *Sepher Sephiroth*, which was published in No. 8. *The Vision and The Voice* was published in *The Equinox* in 1911 and this is a record of a magical operation based on the Enochian Calls.

CHAPTER 12

1. Robert Hooke in his paper, *An Ingenious Cryptographical System*, arrived at a similar conclusion in identifying Bess of Hardwick, based on one of the angelic visions.
2. *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*, by Conyers Read.
3. See Bibliography: Maltwood.
4. *Libri Mysteriorum* and Casaubon.

CHAPTER 13

1. See also Sloane MS. 3677 f. 172 et seq. On 27 June, 1584, Kelley confessed to Dee that he had been dealing with evil spirits for some time.

2. *John Dee, Studied as an English Neo-Platonist*, by I. R. F. Calder.
3. Dee refers to the Czar's offer in *Compendious Rehearsal*, ch. II, p. 9. See also State Papers Foreign Addenda XXIX (p. 1414) and Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, vol. I, p. 573, where it is suggested that the Czar was interested in alchemy and had a plan for the discovery of a North-east Passage.
4. See Bibliography: Josten.

CHAPTER 14

1. *Private Diary*.
2. *Ibid*.
3. *The Queens and The Hive*, Sitwell.
4. Ashmole MS. 1446 f. 481.
5. See The Magic of Aleister Crowley, Symonds: quotation from O.T.O. documents, entitled *De Arte Magica*, caput xv.

CHAPTER 15

1. *Posthumous Works*, Robert Hooke.
2. *Ibid*.
3. *An Ingenious Cryptographical System*, Robert Hooke.
4. Statement by Louis de Wohl in article entitled *Strangest Battle of the War*, *Sunday Graphic*, 9 Nov., 1947. The spelling of "Klafft" is wrong. This was Karl Ernst Krafft, the Swiss astrologer, who was Hitler's personal adviser.
5. John Pearson in his *The Life of Ian Fleming*, Cape, London, 1966, tells how Fleming, when in the N.I.D. had the idea of getting Crowley to interview Rudolf Hess, himself a dabbler in astrology. Nothing came of this plan, though Crowley replied that he was willing to offer his services.
6. *Posthumous Works*, Robert Hooke.
7. *The Golden Dawn*, Regardie, vol. IV, pp. 346-68.
8. *An Ingenious Cryptographical System*, Hooke.
9. *Ibid*.

CHAPTER 16

1. An excellent summary of Walsingham's Spanish intelligence plan is contained in Conyers Read's *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*. The actual State Papers need to be checked against additional information from a variety of sources, a most important source being Dr. James Wellwood's *Memoirs*.
2. See Wellwood's *Memoirs* and Conyers Read.
3. See *Divers Curious Narrations*. It is clear from this narrative of Arthur Dee that Francis Garland was the carrier of this message.

Arthur Dee also refers to "the wax pantacle, on which John Dee by signs cabbalistic and mathematicall accurately prescribe the nature of the storms which shortly afterwards were to scatter and destroy the Spanish Armada . . . but which was not properly understood by those who received it." One must assume that this was also dispatched by secret messenger.

4. Wellwood's *Memoirs*, pp. 8-9 and Spanish War Paper, Navy Records Society.
5. See *Divers Curious Narrations* and *Francis Garlande: A Reporte in the Papers of Duncan Dee* (Bibliography). Duncan Dee preserved some scraps of the Dee family papers and this report of what John Dee said, by Francis Garland, may have been the origin of the story that Dee had a talisman for raising a storm to disperse the Armada, said to be a wax pentacle. It seems more likely that it was a weather forecast rather than a talisman.
6. *His Life and Times*, William Lilly.
7. *An Ingenious Cryptographical System*, Hooke. Presumably here the suggestion was that the Spanish Fleet would only be deterred by the English fire-ships.
8. See also *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, Mattingly.

CHAPTER 17

1. Letter dated 10 Nov., 1588, in Brit. Mus. See also Ellis, *Letters of Eminent Literary Men*, p. 45.
2. *Private Diary*.
3. See also Niceron's *Memoires*, vol. i, p. 359. The letter Strype quoted was dated 20 Aug., 1589, *Annals* iii, 2, p. 132. Also State Papers, Addenda xxxi.
4. Cited by Hort, Smith and others.
5. *Private Diary*, 6 Dec., 1590. There were several references about this time in Dee's diaries to Welsh friends and relatives. Dr. David Lewis, judge of the Admiralty, whose tomb is in Abergavenny Churchyard, was godfather to one of his children. Dee was in fact one of a large Welsh circle in London and among these was John David Rhys, author of the first *Welsh Grammar*, 1592.
6. State Papers, Dom., 1591.
7. This simile is a strange one and somewhat ambiguous. While it seems to imply that Kelley is again having some success as a manufacturer of gold, it could equally be argued that as a hen does not normally crack nuts, he was failing miserably.
8. *An Ingenious Cryptographical System*, Hooke. Hooke believed that Madimi's reference (chap. xii) to "dog painters and cat painters" was a coded reference to the minute paintings inside the shew-

stone. Hooke asserted that Dee had different shew-stones by which he operated, according to the nature of his seance. One of these was an "obsidian" mirror, with a protruding handle, into which "minute paintings were moste cunningly inserted".

9. C. A. Burland: *The Arts of the Alchemists*.

CHAPTER 18

1. *Private Diary*.
2. Ashmole MS. 488.
3. *His Life and Times*, Lilly.
4. *Witches and Sorcerers*, Arkon Daraul. Dee's fears may have been aroused by the publication in 1603 of Harsnet's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, a tirade against exorcists. Shakespeare did not publish *Macbeth* until 1606, but his witches theme certainly showed his awareness of matters of public controversy.
5. See Bibliography: *Petition to the King's Moste Excellent Majestie*.
6. Statement by William Aubrey, based on an account of Dee in his later days by a servant named Goody Faldo.
7. According to some Russian historians Arthur Dee was suspected of being a spy for the English. This may even have been true. Certainly some of the passages in his *Divers Curious Narrations* might have aroused Russian suspicions.
8. Sir Thomas Browne, *Works*, edited by Wilkin, i. 493.
9. *An Ingenious Cryptographical System*, Hooke. For Arthur Dee's sojourn in Russia see Cal. State Papers Dom 1627, pp. 197, 211. Also Russian historians Zaramzin, Solovyov, Klyuchevsky and Prof. Alexander Zimin, of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, all have something to say about Arthur Dee who was regarded in Moscow as a most remarkable scholar.
10. *Divers Curious Narrations*. Prince Serge Belloselski thought that the Russian royal family must have been given Arthur Dee's narrative in Russian and that Rasputin, because of his interest in the occult, had either borrowed or stolen it from the Czarina. It came back into the possession of the Romanovs later and from them into the possession of Prince Belloselski, who translated it into more or less modern English.
11. The Dee family had many branches. Francis Dee, Bishop of Peterborough, and William Aubrey, of Kew, one-time Vicar-General, were cousins of John Dee. Arthur's son, Rowland, was a merchant and his son, Duncan, was engaged in some famous law-suits as counsel. Some members of the Dee family appear to have changed the spelling of their name to Day and Dey. Mr. J. Wentworth Day wrote to the author: "I am not a direct descendant of

John Dee, but he was a member of the family. I am descended from Dr. William Day, 12th Provost of Eton and Bishop of Winchester in Elizabeth I's reign.

Ivor Dee, a relation of Duncan Dee, lived in Copenhagen between 1775 and 1790 and gathered together more of the Dee papers, including Francis Garland's report of the Armada warnings. Ivor Dee is said to have retired to Bristol. In the author's quest for information on John Dee's descendants he received a letter, dated 14 December, 1966, from Mrs. Ruth Amos, of Exeter, which stated: "We have in our possession a silver spoon which was greatly valued by my mother, who always understood it had direct connections with Dr. John Dee. It has inscribed on it: "I. Dee, M.S., 1795.'" It seems possible that the "I" stands for Ivor and not Johannes.

12. Letter by Mr. Christopher Mayhew, M.P., to *The Times*, 25 July, 1967.

APPENDIX ON CRYPTOGRAPHY IN JOHN DEE'S ERA

I. INFLUENCE OF THE ABBOT TRITHEMIUS

Though Dee was the first to see the cryptographical possibilities of Trithemius' treatises, others followed suit: Duke August of Brunswick in 1624 with his *Cryptomenytices et Cryptographie*, based entirely on Trithemius, and in 1665 by a Jesuit, G. Schott, who wrote *Schola Steganographica*.

But it was Dee who first pin-pointed the advantage of Trithemius' system—that, by exercising some care, the existence of a coded message could be concealed so that the "clear" was in one language, while the message was in another. The basis of this system was the substitution of words or phrases for actual letters, giving a wide choice of phrases for each letter. Thus the word "bad" could be enciphered either by "Pallas is blessed of charm", or "you are admired of women, Astarte", or "A god of grace enthroned." It is easy to see how this method could be applied to the "angelic conversations", though its disadvantage is that the enciphered message is so much longer than the "clear" that it takes a long time to decipher.

2. CIPHERS IN ELIZABETHAN DAYS

The Public Record Office in London has three volumes of nearly 200 cipher-codes dating from the reign of Elizabeth I. Lord Burghley used signs of the Zodiac for codes: *Aries* referred to the Duke of Parma, *Cancer* to the Estates-General, *Gemini* to Count Maurice, *Leo* to the Council of State, etc.

Latin words were also used: *visus* for Burghley, *oculus* for the Lord High Admiral, *auditus* for Leicester, *olfactus* for Walsingham.

Numbers, as we have seen, were also used: in Sir Henry Wotton's code England was signified by 39, ammunition by 67, the Queen of Spain by 55, Genoa by 43, war by 29, Holland as 96, Germany as 70, etc.

Dee, who had been a friend of Jerome Cardan, also made reference

to the Cardan or "Trellis Cipher", which consisted of a block of letters which were read downwards vertically and then upwards again, thus:

T	H	S	S	A
H	S	H	E	I
E	I	I	V	L
S	N	P	A	E
P	A	S	H	D

This reads "The Spanish ships have sailed". But this was regarded by Dee as "a childish cryptogram such as any man of knowledge shud be able to resolve".

But in following Trithemius and attempting to seek the perfect cipher, Dee in many instances has baffled posterity as well as those of his own era. It is probable that many of his messages were never correctly deciphered and the abstruseness of his codes may have exasperated his contemporaries in times of crisis.

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